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BMA fears checks may be refused

Life insurers demand gene test results

By MARIANNE CURPHEY AND JEREMY LAURANCE

PEOPLE applying for life insurance are to be required to disclose if they have taken genetic tests to predict whether they are at risk of inherited disease.

The ruling yesterday by the British Association of Insurers — which will apply to all life cover including endowments, mortgage protection policies and personal pensions — is likely to mean higher premiums for some people, even though they may be in good health when they apply.

Doctors immediately expressed fears that people would be deterred from seeking tests that might save their lives, and there were also concerns last night that the policy would create an uninsurable underclass.

At the moment, only a few thousand people undergo genetic screening each year, with tests concentrating on specific genes linked to diseases such as cystic fibrosis and Huntington's Chorea. But scientists have begun to identify gene combinations associated with more common conditions such as heart disease and cancer, and doctors believe that screening will become as routine as measuring blood pressure within a decade.

Such screening could predict people's vulnerability to other conditions where there is believed to be a genetic factor including diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, ulcers and Alzheimer's — allowing them to start early treatment which could prevent disability and even save their lives.

In the face of such advances, the British Medical Association expressed reservations about the insurers' announcement — which mirrors their insistence in the 1980s that anyone who had an HIV test should declare it, even if the result was negative. The BMA was concerned about the increasing use of health information for non-health purposes and worried that complex information could be misinterpreted. "We would be concerned if people were discouraged from finding out more about their health needs because of fears about the social implications of taking a test," a spokeswoman said.

The National Consumer Council said that the new policy could create a pile of rejects. "By using genetic test information when assessing risks, insurance companies could create an ever-increasing ghetto of uninsurable people. People with inherited diseases and their descendants could be denied cover and the idea that insurance is about pooling risk would fly out of the window."

A number of insurance companies were also concerned that the tests could be used as an excuse for refusing cover or making it prohibitively expensive. Peter Robertson of the Edinburgh-based Standard Life said that it would not seek the results of genetic tests for the foreseeable future. "It is more important to Standard Life that we are not seen to hinder medical research. Geneticists felt this requirement to disclose results might put people off taking such tests. This leads to concerns that insurers might slow down the pace at which research would proceed, preventing cures from being developed."

But the Association of British Insurers defended its decision as "very carefully considered and responsible", adding that companies needed to gather information on test results to enable them to "monitor developments and gauge any financial impact". Special arrangements were necessary to protect companies from being exploited by people at high risk.

The association did, however, say that there would be a two-year moratorium during which test results would not be used against applicants for life policies linked to mortgages up to £100,000. Nor would anyone be compelled to take a genetic test — as is common practice in America — before 1999. Tony Baker, the association's deputy director general, said that the two-year gap would enable the industry to "reassess developments in the fast-changing world of medical research".

He dismissed the notion of an insurance underclass and said that genetic testing would have positive benefits for all. "If someone has a positive test and it shows them to be more liable to a particular disease, they can change their lifestyle, stop drinking or stop smoking. As a result, we will have a healthier population and lower insurance premiums because of a reduced death rate as people live longer."

Mr Baker's association has 440 members. Last year there were 5.4 million applications for new life assurance policies, and the total value of premiums paid was £45 billion.

Michael Allocock faces jail when sentenced today after being convicted at the Old Bailey of accepting cash from foreign businessmen to fund a life of luxury, lust and deceit.

His betrayal of trust has prompted a clampdown at the Inland Revenue in an effort to ensure that the department's reputation is never again smeared by erring inspectors corrupted by the wealth with which they come into contact.

Allocock, 47, from Colchester, Essex, was convicted on six charges of corruption, but cleared on five other counts. He had denied all 11 charges and was stony-faced as a jury of six women and five men — the twelfth was ill — returned the verdicts after 35 hours and 48 minutes of deliberation, spanning 6½ days.



Michael Allocock before his conviction at the Old Bailey yesterday, which means he could be sentenced to seven years in jail, and his wife Sally

Corrupt tax inspector faces jail

By TIM JONES AND BILL FROST

AN unprecedented Inland Revenue anti-corruption operation is continuing after a senior investigator was found guilty of taking bribes on a "breath-taking" scale.

Michael Allocock faces jail when sentenced today after being convicted at the Old Bailey of accepting cash from foreign businessmen to fund a life of luxury, lust and deceit.

His betrayal of trust has prompted a clampdown at the Inland Revenue in an effort to ensure that the department's reputation is never again smeared by erring inspectors corrupted by the wealth with which they come into contact.

Earlier, John Black, for the prosecution, had told the court that Allocock had "abused his position with the Inland Revenue and betrayed its integrity for his personal enrichment". Among the six guilty counts, he was convicted of accepting the services of Ms Corrigan as a bribe from Hisham Alwan, an Iraqi-born oil consultant. Alwan, 56, from Knightsbridge, central London, was also convicted on one charge of corruption, but cleared on two other charges. He had denied all three.

During the four-month trial which, with the investigation, is estimated to have cost £8 million, the jury heard how Allocock had protected wealthy businessmen whom he was supposed to be assessing. "He was corrupted by the wealth he saw around him," said Mr Black. "He was a maverick, seen by some as flamboyant and by others as flash. He worked very much in his own way and became a law unto himself."

Allocock headed a special Inland Revenue department known as the Ghostbusters. He targeted extremely wealthy foreigners, mainly Arabs, known as "ghosts" because they never registered for tax. Instead of demanding full tax payments from some, he readily accepted their bribes and pocketed at least £135,000 in cash.

Continued on page 2, col 1

EU to condemn Britain over BSE

The European Parliament is expected to condemn Britain's handling of the BSE epidemic and urge court proceedings against Douglas Hogg, the agriculture minister. A report by a parliamentary inquiry also censures the EU Commission. Page 2

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Labour to repeal gay law

By ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JACK STRAW, the Shadow Home Secretary, will today commit a Labour government to repealing controversial Conservative legislation which was seen as an attack on homosexual rights.

The pledge to kill off Section 28 of the Local Government Act, which bans local authorities from promoting homosexuality in a positive light, will be made by Mr Straw on the third anniversary of MPs voting to lower the homosexual age of consent from 21 to 16.

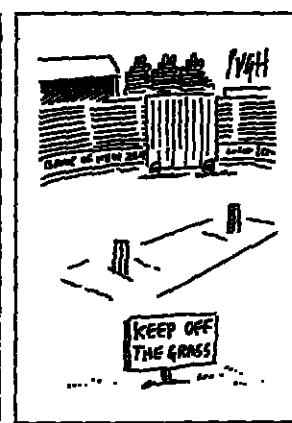
The declaration will delight the Labour Left but will be seized on by right-wing Tories who will argue that the move is a signal that a Tony Blair government will be too liberal on moral issues. A senior Tory Party source said last night: "It is a sop to the politically correct brigade which is already returning to left-wing town halls."

Section 28, which was opposed by Labour and the Liberal Democrats, prohibits local authorities and schools from publishing material for the promotion of homosexuality. Teachers were forbidden to represent homosexuality as an accepted form of family life and town halls were restricted from giving financial support or assistance to anyone wishing to convey homosexuality in a positive light. There have been no prosecutions to date.

Section 28 became a cause célèbre for the libertarian left and provoked a series of clashes with gay rights campaigners. More than 70 artists led by Sir Ian McKellen, Simon Callow, and Nigel Hawthorne, of *Yes Minister* fame, took to the stage to protest against the government crackdown which they argued was censorship of the arts and an attack on the homosexual community.

Mr Straw will deliver his keynote speech tonight at a meeting of Stonewall, the organisation which campaigns for homosexual equality, at the House of Commons.

Mr Straw, who along with Mr Blair voted for 10 to be the age of homosexual consent in the debate in February 1994, has been a long-standing champion of homosexual law reform.



Tufnell denial

Philip Tufnell, the England bowler, denied smoking cannabis in a Christchurch bar on the eve of England's victory in the third Test. The team management backed his word against that of the bar staff. Pages 3, 19, 48

Tory gun rebels defeated

By POLLY NEWTON AND RICHARD FORD

THE Government suffered its worst backbench revolts of the present Parliament last night as more than 100 Tory MPs voted against three key parts of its gun control legislation.

Five former Cabinet ministers, including John Redwood, were among the Tories who defied a three-line whip to back an amendment passed in the Lords that would have allowed owners of .22 calibre weapons to keep parts of their guns at home. They would have been allowed to take their weapons apart to make them safe instead of storing them in gun club armories.

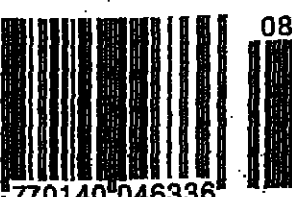
Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, with the support of many Labour MPs, succeeded in having the amendment overturned by 394 votes to 115.

Several rebels said last night that they hoped the Lords would continue their campaign and send the Bill back to the Commons again. Peers will consider the Firearms (Amendment) Bill again tomorrow. The other former Cabinet ministers defying the Government were John MacGregor, Tom King, John Biffen and Michael Jopling.

There was an even larger rebellion over a Lords move to give compensation to gun dealers who will lose business as a result of the legislation. The Government had the amendment overturned by 319 votes to 140, with more than 100 Tory backbenchers defying the whips. Mr Howard told MPs that the amendment would have extended the arrangements for compensation "beyond anything which we have seen before in comparable circumstances".

In a third vote, MPs voted by 305 to 145, a majority of 160, to throw out a Lords move to give compensation to gun clubs forced out of business by the legislation.

Tony Marlow, MP for Northampton North, said that the Government and Labour had lined up against the Tory party in the 22 weapons division. There was surprise that seven Liberal Democrats, including Paddy Ashdown, had voted for the Lords amendment. Twelve Labour MPs also supported it.



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Alluring foreign model some might not want to take home

mysterious and alluring foreign lady entered the Commons fray at Prime Minister's Questions yesterday. The Tories accused Labour's Robin Cook of taking his responsibilities (for "Foreign Affairs") too far and canoodling with her.

Absent from the Chamber, he was to be found (claimed Alan Duncan, MP for Rutland & Melton) "at home with her". And if they had their way, suggested Duncan, a lot of other Opposition MPs would be at home with her too. Had

his Right Hon Friend the Prime Minister ever been at home with her? Was he at home with her now? Mr Major looked bemused.

Many think that when God saw how small Alan Duncan was going to be, He made him Bolshie to compensate. But I believe that when God saw how Bolshie Mr Duncan was going to turn out, He made him tiny to limit the damage. Imagine an MP with Nicholas Soames's frame and Alan Duncan's nature.

How was the Prime Minis-

ter to answer? Well, said Major, he was "self-evidently not at home" with this model.

The model in question should be named, and was yesterday, by Mr Duncan. She is the European Social Model. It is with her that Robin Cook admits to being at home, and John Major denies cohabitation. She has been in all the newspapers and is accused of subverting the German work-force. Duncan finished his question with a claim (Labour's tax plans) which echoed not just the spirit but



the letter of a new Tory poster. Labour backbenchers parrot, likewise, their own party's posters: "You can't trust the Tories on tax," etc. The parliamentary plankton on both sides do so on the whispered instructions of spin doctors. The aim of these night creatures is to scatter across their backbenches the seed of ran-

corous, mean-minded little quotes so that each day produces a reliable crop of TV, radio and press soundbites which are "on-message".

To this, then, has the Mother of Parliaments now come: MPs debate by shouting out quotations from their parties' roadside billboards.

Truly, the dumbing down of

Westminster is complete. John Major promised Alan Duncan never to touch the offending lady. Who needs a European Social Model when he has Norma?

The finger of suspicion had touched Tony Blair, too. "Where were you last night?" shouted the Tories as he slunk in, rather guiltily, just in time for PM's Questions. At the division 17 hours earlier, Mr Blair had been strangely missing from his place on the Front Bench when the tellers marched in with unwelcome

arithmetic for Labour whips, after the vote on BSE. By his own side he was greeted yesterday not so much with a cheer as a whimper.

Mr Blair came back hard with some powerful questions on profiteering after railway privatisation. To them Mr Major had no answer, but his own side cheered him lustily anyway. For the moment he could do no wrong.

Nor could Andrew Robathan (C. Blaby), who had learnt about the way Robin Cook slapped down his party's

too-hastily-routed proposals to privatise the Tote. Had the PM "studied the form for the five-o'clock at Market Rasen?" asked Robathan. There was a horse running "called Pause For Thought".

"Fell at the first fence," said Major.

We moved to Devolution. Thursday's debate, the Prime Minister told the Commons, should be "an opportunity for detailed and sensible discussion". "What? Here?" cried Dennis Skinner. Skinner is off-message.

Euro-MPs direct anger at Britain over BSE crisis

BY CHARLES BREMNER, IN BRUSSELS, AND ANDREW PIERCE

BRITAIN will bear the brunt of the European Union's anger over "mad cow" disease today when the European Parliament votes to condemn London's handling of the BSE epidemic, calls for repayment of EU compensation and seeks court proceedings against Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister.

The harsh judgment is set out in a report by a parliamentary inquiry that also blames the European Commission for incompetence and negligence. In an attempt to head off a possible vote of censure, Jacques Santer, the President of the Commission, yesterday went further than before in conceding mistakes in Brussels.

He ridiculed British claims that BSE was an act of nature and blamed the epidemic on a greedy farm industry that had turned cows into "cannibals". In a move to defuse its conflict with the Commission, the Parliament is expected to suspend a possible vote of censure and give M Santer until November to reform its ways.

Downing Street yesterday dismissed the report as ill-informed "tosh". It is expected to be passed with a large majority in Strasbourg today. "It is a flawed piece of work," said a spokesman. "There are a great number of factual errors and misunderstanding of the UK's approach to BSE."

The report, drafted under Spanish and German leadership, lambasted London for conducting an irresponsible policy over BSE from the mid-1980s until late last year. Britain, it argued, stacked Brussels committees with its own experts, ensuring that the disease was neglected for years.

The Parliament will endorse a call by the inquiry committee



Lord Plumb spoke up in Britain's defence

by advice from the Government's law officers, not to go before the European committee of inquiry. "It was not a request from the committee, it was a summons. Ministers of the Crown are answerable to the House of Commons. It was unanimously agreed by the Cabinet that Douglas Hogg should not go. We provided every piece of documentation they sought," he added.

A spokesman for M Santer said the call for repayment would not be followed up

because there was no legal basis and it would penalise British farmers directly.

MEPs argued that their demands have served as a strong public rebuke for the Commission and especially for Britain. The parliamentary condemnation has added to difficulties in restoring British beef's reputation in Europe.

Pauline Green, the British MEP who heads the Socialist group, condemned the Government but added that the Commission was "culpable". "Its procedures were shambolic," she said.

A rare voice in Britain's defence was raised by Lord Plumb, the Conservative MEP who sat on the committee of inquiry. "The idea that within the Commission there has been some sort of British conspiracy is utterly fanciful and unworthy of report in this House," he said.

Downing Street released the text of a strongly-worded letter from Sir Stephen Wall, Britain's permanent representative in Brussels, to Reimer Boge, the German MEP who chaired the inquiry. He said that the Government had spent £60 million on research into BSE and related diseases since 1986. He said it was "absurd" and "insulting" to accuse scientists, who had conducted groundbreaking research, of being engaged in a conspiracy.

The tone of the report infuriated Tory Eurosceptic MPs. David Heathcoat Amory, the former Paymaster General, said: "The fact that they had a chance to meet Douglas Hogg in London, when they were here, and turned it down shows the scale of their arrogance. They only want it on their terms. In Brussels, this is all about their own self-importance."



Sir George Gardiner leaving court yesterday

MP loses court fight against deselection

BY JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

CONSERVATIVE MP Sir George Gardiner lost his latest attempt to remain in Parliament when a High Court judge yesterday refused to overturn his deselection.

Members of his Reigate party ousted the veteran Eurosceptic at a special general meeting in the Surrey constituency on January 30 after the MP criticised the Prime Minister. Lawyers for Sir George claimed that the Reigate Conservative Association had no power, under its rules, to deselect him. And they argued that even if the association did have the pow-

er, they went about it in the wrong way.

However, Sir Richard Scott, Vice-Chancellor of the Chancery Division, ruled that the association had every right to deselect their prospective parliamentary candidate and rejected Sir George's writ demanding that the deselection be declared void.

"There is nothing in the rules that bars a deselection process by a general meeting," Sir Richard told the court. After the judgment, Sir George, 61, said he would not appeal but insisted he did regret taking legal action.

Nursery school failings common

BY DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

THE most far-reaching investigation of education standards for four-year-olds has found shortcomings in almost half of the nursery schools inspected.

Basic literacy education was found to be weak in one in five nursery groups and in one in four for mathematics. The results, from more than 320 centres in the four trial areas of the Government's nursery voucher scheme, came a week before parents of all four-year-olds will begin receiving vouchers to use from April.

More than 500,000 families have so far applied for the vouchers, worth £1,100 towards the cost of a nursery place for a year. Parents can exchange them for state nursery or reception places or top them up for private education.

Labour called the findings "dire" but the Government said it was pleased that the majority of classes had been given a clean bill of health.

The Pre-School Playgroups Alliance said it was impressed that four in five nurseries passed their inspection for literacy, given their record of being underfunded.

Inspectors found "overall strengths" in 55 per cent of the groups, which were in school reception classes, playgroups and private and voluntary nurseries in Norfolk and the London boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea, Wandsworth and Westminster. However, almost all the playgroups and nurseries will continue to be eligible for the vouchers. The 45 per cent with "weaknesses" will have to show improvements when they are inspected again within two years.

The inspectors concluded: "Sound practice and provision are sufficiently widespread to show that all types of institutions are able to meet the requirements of the scheme. It is true, however, that weaknesses are also widespread."

New steps against art smugglers ruled out

The Government yesterday refused to impose new controls on the smuggling of art treasures into Britain, despite allegations that staff at Sotheby's had been involved in the illegal export of an 18th-century painting and that the practice is widespread within the art trade. It is not against British law to import antiquities that have been illegally excavated and exported from their countries of origin. Lord Inglewood, the junior National Heritage minister, told the Lords at Question Time: "We believe the London art market is important for this country and we wish to maintain its position." He urged proper self-regulation.

Lottery grant for river banks

The biggest lottery grant awarded to a public arts scheme will be used to line the banks of the Tyne and Wear with sculpture. Works by international artists and local amateurs will transform the riversides after yesterday's announcement by the Arts Council that the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation is to receive £3.58 million, the largest of 49 lottery awards totalling almost £11 million.

Gales kill lorry driver

Strong winds and rain that swept Britain yesterday, killing a lorry driver, will continue into the weekend, the Met Office said last night. Drivers were told to take extra care as felled trees and power cables caused chaos on the roads and large vehicles were toppled by gusts of up to 60mph. After a quieter period this morning, winds will sweep across the country from the west. Forecast, page 24

Swiss trip for Bosnian girl

The Bosnian orphan girl at the centre of an adoption dispute is to fly out to Switzerland to see her natural grandfather after a High Court judge ruled she should be raised by her British foster parents. Lawyers acting for the extended family of four-year-old Edita Keranovic said yesterday that they were still considering an appeal against the decision that the child should stay with Alan and Deborah Fowler.

Killer rapist gets life

A rapist was given a life sentence yesterday for murdering a counsellor who had visited him in prison. Tony Hallett, 39, subjected his 58-year-old victim to a sex attack almost identical to the one he had been jailed for ten years ago. At Exeter Crown Court, Hallett, of Letchworth, Hertfordshire, admitted raping and killing Ruth Hunt after he went to her home and she invited him in for advice and a cup of tea.

Four arrested in Irish raids

Police in the Irish Republic arrested four men yesterday during a series of anti-terrorist raids. Armed police seized homemade detonating cord similar to that used in IRA attacks in London, Germany and Northern Ireland. A police spokesman said the cords would be examined by forensic scientists in Dublin. The four men were arrested in Co Westmeath and on the Co Waterford and Tipperary border.

Silent vigil in Dunblane

Families of the victims of the Dunblane massacre will hold a silent vigil on the site of the gym where 16 children and a teacher were killed to mark the first anniversary of the shootings. Dunblane Primary School will be closed until 10.30am on March 13 to allow relatives to grieve in private. The only public show of sorrow will be at 1pm when white candles will be lit in the windows of homes across the town.

Kidnapped baby found

A British missionary was reunited with her 14-month-old adopted son four days after he was kidnapped from the family home in the Malawian city of Blantyre. Timothy Funnell was found unharmed by two schoolboys on a riverbank. The baby, who is at the centre of a custody battle in South Africa, was adopted last year by Julia Funnell, 30, from Bow, east London, and her husband Barry.

Soccer fans win damages

Five Irish soccer fans who sued the Football Association of Ireland for injuries sustained when rioting erupted at the match between England and Ireland in Dublin in 1995 accepted out-of-court settlements at the city's Circuit Civil Court. The FAI agreed to pay an undisclosed sum to the men who claimed they suffered serious injuries when English fans rioted at Lansdowne Road.

Tax inspector guilty of corruption is facing jail

Continued from page 1

leagues now face an internal disciplinary inquiry as a result of the scandal — easily the most serious corruption incident the Revenue has faced — with possible sanctions ranging up to and including dismissal.

In addition, there has been a major overhaul of supervisory procedures so opportunities for abusing the system are severely restricted. Inspectors are now obliged to decline all but the most petty gifts, hospitality or entertainment. Only trivial items such as diaries can be accepted. There is much tighter control on overseas travel — only about 20 trips in all were made last year — and they must never be at the expense of a suspected tax evader.

Staff movement between offices has

been increased to try to prevent inspectors developing excessively lengthy relationships with suspects. When promoted to the grade of group leader, the rank enjoyed by Allcock, senior inspectors are no longer allowed to head up an office in which they have worked.

The Revenue insisted that, in any case, Allcock never enjoyed the latitude of which he boasted during his trial. He told the Old Bailey that he worked to his own rules but, in theory at least, in any case in which the suspected tax evader was believed to have owed more than £150,000, he was supposed to refer his proposed settlement upwards, to a principal inspector.

The procedural tightening was partly a reaction to the Allcock case, and

partly an outcome of the 1992 merger of the Revenue's Special Offices with its Inquiry Branch, forming the Special Compliance Office — nicknamed the Ghostbusters. That office is tasked with investigating cases of serious tax fraud and evasion outside the scope of local offices because of their size or complexity. It seeks to recover the lost tax, with interest and penalties where due, and in particularly serious cases to institute criminal proceedings. In 1995-96 it recovered £354 million.

The Old Bailey heard how Allcock accepted foreign travel, meals in expensive restaurants and other favours worth tens of thousands of pounds.

One of his rewards was a £22,000 "holiday of a lifetime" with his family

to Bermuda with Concorde flights. The trip was paid for by Ara Oztanel, an American-based Armenian businessman who had been assessed as liable for £2 million in British tax.

Allcock, who could face a maximum of seven years in jail, yesterday had his bail withdrawn by Judge Beaumont and was led down to the cells. Before the verdicts, he had protested his innocence. "The scarier gun approach of these charges show how desperate they were to get me. All I care about is my wife and son Benjamin."

They [the Inland Revenue] were always niggardly in their praise. They always wanted the wine glass filled but when you went out from scratch and got it half-filled that was an achievement they may never have gained."



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Seven-year-old used to sweat, scream and make himself sick on other food

Doctors help boy hooked on jam sandwiches

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD who ate nothing but jam sandwiches for three years has finally managed to beat his addiction after hospital treatment.

Craig Flatman, from Stowmarket, Suffolk, refused to eat anything other than strawberry or raspberry jam with margarine on two slices of white bread after developing an aversion to solid food as a baby.

After chomping through about 20,000 jam sandwiches, his despairing mother Almira finally took her son to see specialists at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children and, with gentle persuasion, Craig has now tasted fruit, meat and vegetables for the first time.

Yesterday, Mrs Flatman, 35, recalled how she got through five loaves of bread and two jars of jam every week making her son nine rounds of jam sandwiches for his breakfast, lunch and dinner every day. "He used to insist that I cut the crusts off, only use soft margarine and soft-set jam because he did not want anything with lumps in," Mrs Flatman said.

He refused to eat solid food as a baby until, when he was nine months, his father Alan fed him a sandwich with a sugar filling. It led to an initial infatuation with chocolate spread sandwiches until, when he was four, Craig announced he did not want them any more and asked for jam.

"We used to try to make him

eat other things almost every mealtime. But he just used to sweat, shake, scream and make himself sick. In the end it was so stressful that we could not carry on trying to force-feed him."

When he began hospital treatment, Craig slowly began to get over his fear of food over a six-month period by playing with it and eventually taking tiny bites. Now, in common with most other children, his favourites are chips, baked beans, pizzas, pancakes and porridge.

Mandy Bryon, consultant clinical psychologist at Great Ormond Street, said it was normal for children to be faddy about food at some stage, but Craig's case was fairly exceptional.

"I think his problem stems from a fear of food, probably going back to when he first started eating solids as a baby and gagged on some lumps. We encouraged him to become familiar with it through touching it and eventually tasting it."

Astonishingly, Craig has never had a filling in his life, while his five-year-old sister Amy, who eats normally, has two. Mrs Flatman said last night, "He still has a long way to go, but he is trying new things every day, and getting more confident with food," Mrs Flatman added.

"But he has still not given up jam completely. I allow him one round of jam sandwiches in his school packed lunch and another of cheese spread."



Jammy dodger: Craig Flatman refused to eat anything other than white bread jam sandwiches for three years

Odd tastes need not make you sick

PARENTS like their children to eat a standard diet. It makes them feel good. But is a traditional choice of food essential to their offspring's wellbeing? Before a diet can be condemned as unhealthy it should be analysed to find out whether it contains a correct balance of fats, carbohydrates and protein — the principal ingredients of any sustaining menu — together with the necessary trace elements and vitamins. Jam sandwiches as a child's sole food is obviously less than ideal but is more comprehensive than it may sound. A jam sandwich, if butter or margarine is liber-



ally applied, contains adequate amounts of fat, carbohydrate both in the sugar in the jam and as polysaccharides, together with the fat-soluble vitamins. Provided that the wheat was grown on the correct soil there will also be adequate trace elements. Jam sandwiches will, too, if the bread is wholemeal, provide plenty of roughage. Un-

fortunately the jam sandwich diet will be short on essential amino acids because there is no animal protein, but there will be some vegetable protein. It is likely that a child fed only on jam sandwiches is likely to suffer anaemia, and some protein deficiency. The diet would also be short on vitamin C.

The interesting question is

why this child was so determined to have nothing else and reject the health-giving, parent-comforting, meat and two vegetables for so long?

One of my sons when about two or three lived for a great many months on Spam, Dad's Cookies, a form of biscuit impregnated with pieces of chocolate, and some rather tasty multi-vitamin pills. His physical progress was unimpeded and after a time he went back to standard nursery fare.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD

England bowler dismisses bar's drug allegation

By ALAN LEE AND SIMON WILDE

THE England cricketer Philip Tufnell yesterday described as "ridiculous" allegations that he smoked cannabis in a Christchurch bar on the eve of England's victory in the third Test match in Christchurch.

His denial won the support of the team management, who backed his word against that of the bar's manageress and a waitress. But the story tainted the England team and deflected attention from the result of the match.

Tufnell has a long and turbulent record of indiscipline, and the allegation of drug-taking was potentially sensational. So too, was the timing, applying an unwanted strain and distraction to the England camp on the day their tour efforts had to stand or fall.

It was claimed that the spin bowler and two unnamed companions — neither of them connected to the England team — smoked cannabis on Monday evening in the disabled toilet of the fashionable Bardellis cafe bar in the centre of Christchurch.

"They were the only ones to use the toilet and there was smoke billowing under the door into the restaurant," said Caidin Cherry, the waitress, said "You could smell it, so we had to do something." She added that an English family, dining in the cafe had

"apologised profusely" for the behaviour of Tufnell's group, who were asked to leave.

"They were laughing hysterically. They were having a really good time," Janelle Rossiter, the manageress, told TV3, a local television station. "He [Tufnell] wasn't drunk, but he certainly couldn't drive... I was informed by my staff they were smoking joints in a disabled toilet. I told my staff to follow them the next time they went in."

Tufnell said of the allegation as he left the ground after the game: "I find it extraordinary. In fact, it makes me laugh. It's ridiculous." It was not going to prevent him from joining the team's victory celebrations. "I am still going to go out for a few beers tonight. I'm looking forward to that."

John Barclay, the team manager, unequivocally exonerated him. "I am aware of the allegations and they are very serious," he said. "But I have spoken to Phil at length and very frankly and I am completely satisfied that they are without foundation."

Tim Lamb, chief executive of the English Cricket Board, said: "I assume there is some mischief making going on," adding that as far as the board was concerned Tufnell would not face action over the claims.

Cricket page 48



Tufnell and Tracy Nixon, the bar general manager

Sheep-dip poisoning 'had role in shooting'

By MICHAEL HORNSBY

A FARMER who tried to murder a man living on his farm may have become mentally imbalanced after repeated exposure to a sheep-dip chemical, a court was told yesterday.

Robert Billings, of Warrington, West Sussex, is accused of attempting to kill George Foster, who lived as a tenant in a caravan on the farm and whom he suspected of having an affair with his girlfriend.

Lewes Crown Court was told that on an evening in November 1993, Mr Billings had fired at Mr Foster with a shotgun, leaving him permanently disabled. The men and Mr Billings's girlfriend, Ursula Jenner, had been drinking in local pubs that day.

James Towpnd, for the prosecution, told the jury they were dealing with "a case of drunken rage and it may well be misperceived jealousy". But they must also consider whether sheep-dip poisoning had affected Mr Billings's state of mind, possibly in conjunction with alcohol.

The key issue, Mr Towpnd said, was whether poisoning had affected the defendant's ability "to form the required intent" to shoot Mr Foster, leaving either to kill him or inflict grievous bodily harm. The trial continues.

Husband 'blew up wife to live with young mistress'

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

A HUSBAND doused his wife in petrol and blew up their house so that he could use £100,000 life insurance to set up home with his young mistress, a court was told yesterday.

Rossano Traversari, 31, bound and gagged his wife Alison before their suburban home exploded "like a volcano". When her badly charred body was found by fire officers from the station where she worked as a controller, Mr Traversari said that the couple had been victims of intruders.

John Warren, QC, for the prosecution, told Stafford Crown Court that her death was "the old story of the eternal triangle, and partly greed". Shortly after the couple's marriage in 1992, Mr Traversari had begun an affair with Catherine Boycott, a student. They had met when he was restaurant manager of the Garth Hotel in Stafford and she took a holiday job as a waitress.

The Traversaris split up when Mrs Traversari discovered the affair, but she forgave her husband and took him back. Mr Traversari continued his relationship with Ms Boycott, who started to put pressure on him to leave his wife, Mr Warren said.

The big obstacle was money. Mrs Traversari

earned £15,000 a year but her husband, now a pallet supervisor for the glue maker Bvode in Stafford, was paid only half that sum. "This was a man to whom material things were very important, such as his car, his home, his possessions, his clothing," Mr Warren said. "It's clear that the obstacle, in his mind, to leaving Alison was money."

When the couple's semi-detached house in Stafford was rocked by an explosion in the early hours, Mrs Traversari's badly burnt body, reeking of petrol, was found in a back bedroom. An airgun pellet was lodged in her head.

Mr Traversari told the police that intruders had blindfolded and gagged them but he had escaped when he smelt petrol. Mr Warren said various factors cast doubt on his story. The cable to an outside security light had been cut. His wife's car had been moved to garages near by. Mr Traversari had earlier taken a camcorder, portable television set and clothing to Leeds, where Ms Boycott lived.

A notebook containing an inventory of the items in his house, found at his workplace, was intended as the basis of his insurance claim, Mr Warren said.

Mr Traversari denies murder. The trial continues.

RAC to wave the flag for all those who travel hopefully

By JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE RAC, founded a century ago to campaign for the abolition of the rule that all cars should be preceded by a man carrying a red flag, is to take up the cause of other travellers, including cyclists and pedestrians.

The former gentleman's driving club, which was granted royal patronage by Edward VII in 1907, announced yesterday that it wants to be known as a "mobility association" in future, rather than a motoring organisation.

Neil Johnson, the RAC's chief executive officer, said that membership could soon be extended to people who do not even own or drive cars but need the support of an organisation to promote their inter-

ests. "It is clear that the continuation of such 'high levels of dependence on the car for mobility is unsustainable, and indeed not what most people want. Our members are only motorists part of the time. At other times they need — and wish — to move around by other means. They are clearly telling us that they support ideas such as pedestrianisation of key parts of our towns and cities."

Cycling groups welcomed the RAC's "conversion on the cycle path to Damascus" but expressed doubts whether it was driven by a genuine change of heart or short-term commercial motives.

Peter McGrath, spokesman for the Cyclists' Touring Club,

asked: "Are they going to support the rest of the cyclist agenda such as more traffic calming and less traffic in towns and cities?"

The RAC will not be the first to offer cycling breakdown services to members. The Environmental Transport Association, a tiny "green" motoring group with just 42,000 members, already offers "cycle rescue".

The RAC, which has six million members, has increasingly repositioned itself as an environmentally responsible body during the past five years. For its first 95 years, it was an unabashed member of the roads lobby, calling for ever more to be spent on building roads.

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هكذا من لاصح

Asians put riches down to Thatcherite values

By DOMINIC KENNEDY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

ASIAN millionaires together worth more than £4 billion gathered in London last night to celebrate the publication of a list of the 100 richest among them. Proudly declaring that their values of thrift, hard work and family life had outlasted their heroine, Baroness Thatcher, the businessmen and women toasted their success, mainly with soft drinks, at the Café Royal.

The 100 richest Asians employ 250,000 people around the world and own many high street brands, including Joe Bloggs Clothing, Home Brothers, Ciro Citterio and Colorama. They are self-made, almost to a man.

Forty-four of them are richer than Mukhtar Mohidin, Britain's biggest Nat-

ional Lottery winner, who collected £17.5 million.

Anwar Parvez, joint sixth richest at £100 million, walked eight miles a day as a five-year-old schoolboy in Pakistan but sent his own sons to Eton. "We were Thatcherites before Margaret Thatcher," he said. "We were told by our parents to live within our means. All our progress has been made without borrowing money."

Mr Parvez, who made his fortune from the Bestway cash and carry business, is a farmer's son who arrived in Britain in the 1950s. His first job was as a bus conductor in Bradford. A Muslim, he now lives in a large house with a tennis court in Buckinghamshire. One of his sons is reading law at Oxford and

another has joined the family business. A third son works in Hong Kong and his daughter has gone to Pakistan.

Top of the list is Lakshmi Mittal, from Calcutta, who made £1,500 million after spending 20 years in Indonesia creating the largest private steel company in the world, Ispat. He hosts lavish parties at his home in Hampstead, northwest London.

Mr Mittal is one of the leading "NRIs" — non-resident Indians — who are attracted by Britain's tax laws to make their home here. Other NRIs include Sri and Gopi Hinduja, brothers whose oil and trade business is worth £1,100 million. They are second on the list.

Third is Lord Paul, the

Labour peer, worth £500 million. Another Labour recruit, Mohammed Sarwar, a cash-and-carry mogul worth £10 million and ranked 62nd, hopes to become MP for Glasgow Govan.

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, addressed last night's gathering with an eye on the Asian vote. Lord Bagri, the chairman of the London Metal Exchange and a new Tory peer, is tenth on the list with £80 million.

The youngest is Reuben Singh, 20, who has made £27.5 million (28th place) running the fashion business Miss Attitude while reading financial services at Manchester Metropolitan University.

There are a handful of women on the list. Perween Warsi, despairing of finding a decent samosa in her Derby supermarket, is now worth £35 million after creating a food manufacturing business from her kitchen.

Swati Patel, still humble enough to answer the telephone at her family's car-care product firm in Northampton, trained as a pharmacy technician but joined her father's business. "I had nothing else to do, I was bored." Share transfers have increased her value to £9 million.

Family control is a common theme among those on the list. Many began as waiters or grocers and have remained in food, retail and trading.



Lakshmi Mittal



Lord Paul



Sri Hinduja



Gopi Hinduja



Reuben Singh



Mamubhai Madhvani

BRITAIN'S RICHEST ASIANS

- 1 Lakshmi Mittal (steel) £1,500m
- 2 Sri & Gopi Hinduja (oil and trade) £1,100m
- 3 Lord Paul (steel) £500m
- 4 Mamubhai Madhvani & family (sugar, trade and farming) £140m
- 5 Tom Singh (fashion) £115m
- 6 Ratilal Chandra (industry) £100m
- 7 Anwar Parvez & family (food wholesaling) £100m
- 8 Lakshmi Shrivastava (property, hotels, industry) £100m
- 9 Nat Puri (industry) £95m
- 10 Lord Bagri & Apurv Bagri (metal trade) £80m
- 11 Vijay Malhi (drinks & brewing) £80m
- 12 Gulu Lalvani (electronics) £80m
- 13 Shami Ahmed & family (fashion) £50m
- 14 Tahir Mohsin & Dr Shamin Mohammed (computer sales) £50m
- 15 Nareesh Patel & family (food retailing and film processing) £50m
- 16 Jasminder Singh & family (hotels) £40m
- 17 Perween & Dr Talib Warsi (food manufacturing) £35m
- 18 Dinesh Chandra (paper manufacture) £30m
- 19 Damodar Chandra (industry) £30m
- 20 Shrivastava Dharasani & family (property and paper making) £30m
- 21 Sudhakar Prabhu (consulting engineer) £30m
- 22 Rajesh Patel (importer and distributor of fashion goods) £30m
- 23 Nisalm Mistry (textiles) £30m
- 24 Mac Rasol (video rentals) £30m
- 25 Mukesh Sehgal (fashionware) £30m
- 26 Ramesh Thakrar & family (rice importing and property) £30m
- 27 Anil Rula (textiles) £30m

Leading article, page 19

Shepherd expels scruffy teachers from classroom

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

STUDENT teachers will have to prove they can dress smartly as well as pass grammar and arithmetic tests before they can qualify, the Government announced yesterday.

Polished presentation skills are among the standards laid down in the proposed national curriculum for teacher training colleges. Traditional triad subjects are emphasised, including whole-class teaching instead of lessons where groups or individuals work at their own pace.

Gillian Shepherd, the Education Secretary, said that she did not want "scruffy" teachers in classrooms any more than those who could not teach. "Young people are impressed by image. If they perceive that a teacher regards his or her work as important enough to warrant smart dress and good presentation, then they will accept teaching and think that it is an important job and that they are doing something important in learning."

The new curriculum would ensure that teachers knew how to use phonics, the method of learning to read by teaching the sounds of letters and parts of words. It would also instruct trainees how best to teach mental arithmetic, including a return to chanting multiplication tables.

Trainee teachers will be required to have a minimum grade C in GCSE science, in addition to the existing minimum of C grades in English

and mathematics. Those with a C in mathematics will be expected to improve while on the course, to gain Qualified Teacher Status.

Primary school trainees should have at least one specialist subject at A-level standard and be able to communicate clearly and grammatically. The proposed primary curriculum will begin in September, followed by a new curriculum for secondary teacher training.

The standards for Qualified Teacher Status are expected to form the basis of a revamped appraisal system, announced earlier this month, which could be used to sack failing teachers.

Anthea Millett, chief executive of the Teacher Training Agency, said a significant number of training colleges would have to raise their performance. "These proposals will cause most institutions to make some adjustment in their courses, some a substantial adjustment," she said.

David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, said Labour would introduce a probationary year for newly-qualified teachers. He said the Government had wasted 18 years before acting over teacher standards.

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, welcomed the proposals as "knocking on open doors for many training institutions".

Horseshoe pupils race ahead

AN EXPERIMENT in which schoolchildren sit in a horseshoe pattern has begun to transform standards for inner-city pupils, a conference heard yesterday (David Charter writes).

The double horseshoe arrangement of desks, used in Switzerland and Taiwan, is being heralded as the saviour of "whole-class" teaching. Its success is based on mixing the two systems at the centre of controversy over classroom organisation since Victorian-style rows began to be replaced by small groups in the 1960s. The whole-class method

is preserved because all the children feel involved in the lesson, as they can see each other and the teacher.

In turn, the teacher can see who is not coping. But the pattern also means children can break into groups more easily than when in rows.

Nine-year-olds in Barking and Dagenham, east London, showed marked improvements in grades after a trial year using the horseshoe class for mathematics lessons. They also became more relaxed about speaking in public, because the system requires pupils to take turns in explain-

ing their work to the whole class.

Researchers from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research told a seminar at the Department of Trade and Industry that the system could help to revive whole-class teaching for a new generation. It would answer critics who characterise the whole-class method as preaching from the front.

Professor Sig Prais, senior research fellow at the institute, said the horseshoe helped to explain why Swiss children consistently outperformed other Europeans.

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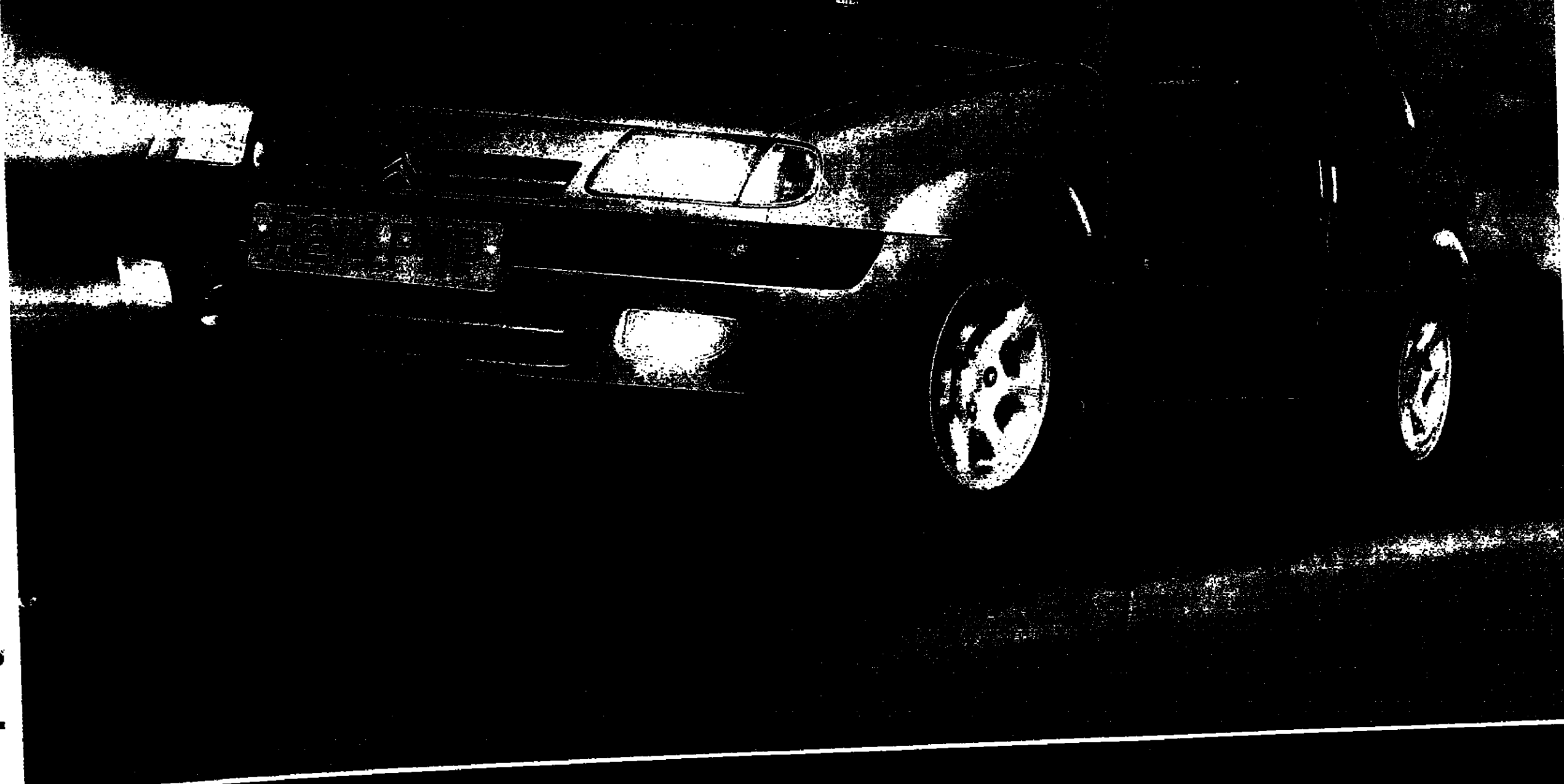
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هكذا من راصد

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 19 1997

Americans' dream ended as they let cats out of the bag

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

A COUPLE'S dream of moving to Britain from America was shattered because France gives no warning to travellers about this country's strict rabies laws.

Yesterday a magistrate criticised French officials, as well as British customs officers at Waterloo station, who seized two cats belonging to Gianni and Astrid De Biagi, from Miami.

The couple maintained they were unaware of the law governing the importation of animals when they brought Frenchie and Flannel into the country in a holdall on the Eurostar from Paris, where they had been staying with relatives. The animals, which had rabies immunisation certificates from Miami, had passed through X-ray machines in Paris and been waved through customs.

On arrival at Waterloo, Mrs De Biagi, 34, told customs officers she had nothing to declare but asked them to be careful when searching her bags as her cats were inside. The cats were immediately taken away. Horseferry Road Magistrates' Court was told. Judy Ranjeet, for the De Biagis, said they were travelling to London for Mrs De Biagi to attend a three-week course with Air France, after which she was due to start a job as a reservations executive.

She lost the job after missing a session to appear in court.

After hearing the story, Rosamond Keating, the magistrate, said: "I think something ought to be done about signs in Paris. How an earth is someone travelling from Miami to Paris supposed to know as a matter of general knowledge that England has strict quarantine rules and continues to be an island, despite the Channel Tunnel?"

Mrs Keating also expressed her disapproval of customs at Waterloo after being told that animal health inspectors had said that anti-rabies vaccination certificates obtained by Mrs De Biagi in Miami were invalid. "They had rabies vaccination certificates. It's quite clear they aren't any danger to England. Are we saying Miami is such a corrupt place that their certificates aren't acceptable in this polite little society of Britain?"

Ms Ranjeet said Mrs De Biagi, who was charged with illegally transporting her cats through the Channel Tunnel, had paid £140 to have them flown from Miami to her parents' home in Paris and would have left them with her mother had she known it was illegal to bring them to England. "She was completely unaware of this country's restrictions," she added. "Mrs De Biagi spent five hours in

custody which was completely traumatic for somebody who has never been in that situation before."

Mrs Keating conditionally discharged Mrs De Biagi for six months with no costs. As they left court, Mr De Biagi said the arrest had cost them £2,000 and had destroyed their dream of moving to England. "For innocent people to have to go through this because of a political ping-pong game between two countries is ridiculous."

Mr and Mrs De Biagi and the cats will now return to Miami. Mr De Biagi said: "We were looking forward to starting a new life here and now that's been destroyed. We heard from so many people what a great city London is, but our first time over here we're arrested and put through all this. Now we just want to get out of here and go back home with our tails between our legs."



Frenchie and Flannel with an assistant at the quarantine unit at Heathrow

Admiral 'claimed a £6,000 pay rise'

A RETIRED admiral asked for a £6,000 pay rise within three months of becoming a £23,600-a-year harbourmaster, an industrial tribunal was told yesterday.

When Hampshire County Council refused Rear-Admiral Tim England's request, he "took the law into his own hands" and refused to supply the council with financial information. Tim Howard, for the council, said Admiral England, 54, was effectively holding the council to ransom.

The council tried to stop the admiral's "unacceptable behaviour" by holding a disciplinary meeting last May. Admiral England had said that if the disciplinary matters against him were revoked, the financial information would be available. Mr Howard said.

On a later occasion the admiral had told a superior that if he were not addressing him by his Christian name — and he would prefer that he did not — then he should address him with the title of rear-admiral. Admiral England is claiming unfair dismissal. The case continues.

SATURDAY
IN THE TIMES

COSTUME DRAMA

Helen Storey celebrates 50 years of British fashion in the Magazine

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Weekend Money Guide



Gianni and Astrid De Biagi outside court yesterday

Soccer to salute first black striker and army officer

By RICHARD DUCE

A MEMORIAL garden is planned to mark the career of a black professional footballer and army officer who was killed while leading white soldiers into action during the Second Battle of the Somme nearly 80 years ago.

Walter Tull, who is thought to have been Britain's first black officer, was cut down by German fire on March 25, 1918. He was 29.

A simple inscription on a war memorial at Arras in France is to date the only testimony to a second lieutenant who became the world's first black professional striker. Northampton Town, for whom Mr Tull played before he enlisted in 1914, hopes to raise £3,000 to build a memorial garden to its former wing-half.

Mr Tull's great-great-nephew, Graham Humphrey, 38, of Maidstone, Kent, said: "History seems to have forgotten the significance of his

achievements. He was a remarkable character, an officer and a gentleman."

Walter Daniel Tull was born in Folkestone in 1888 to a Barbadian father and a local woman, who both died before he was ten. He and his brother Edward were placed in an east London orphanage. Edward, adopted by a Scottish family, became Britain's first black dentist. Walter, after a spell with Clapton Football Club in east London, signed for Tottenham Hotspur as a centre-forward. He was the earliest victim of racial abuse in football, during a match at Bristol City.

He moved to the Midlands and Northampton Town, where he played wing-half in more than 100 first-team games, scoring nine goals, before the outbreak of war. He enlisted with the 7th Middlesex (Footballers' Battalion).

Last month, third division Northampton Town held a memorial match for Mr Tull against Chester to mark the adoption of an equal opportunities policy. Brian Lomax, a director of the club, said: "Walter Tull was a local hero when he played here." Bernie Grant, the Tottenham Labour MP, is lobbying for the north London Premiership side to hold a similar match.

The Defence Ministry said: "Walter Tull is listed as a second lieutenant but there is no mention of colour in our records. As a result it is impossible to say whether he was the first black officer, but we are proud he was one of many prepared to give up their life for this country."



Tull: died while leading soldiers into action

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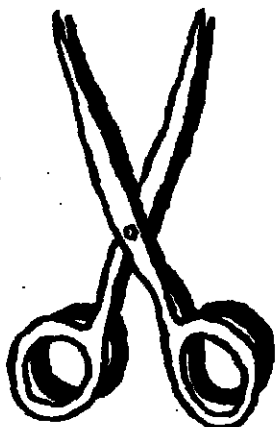
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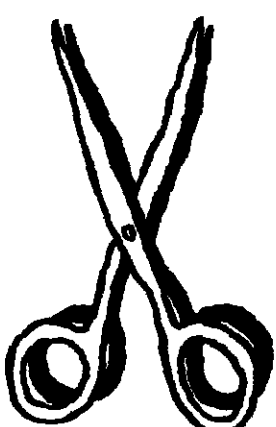
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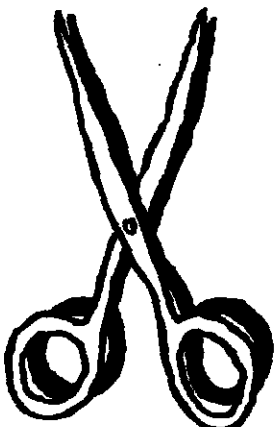
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Social worker acted after patient said she did not care if baby died, court told

Woman claims Caesarean was unlawful

By BILL FROST

A PREGNANT woman held in hospital against her will and forced to undergo a Caesarean section was said yesterday to have had no interest in her own survival or her child's.

The unmarried mother from southwest London, who cannot be named, was suffering "suicidal fantasies" when confined last April. She had also talked of punishing her former partner and hoped that he would feel guilty if she died, the High Court was told.

The allegations came as "Miss S" asked for permission to apply for judicial review against the hospitals that detained her under the 1983 Mental Health Act and then obtained a court order to deliver her baby by

Caesarean section, after fears about her physical health.

Lawyers for the 29-year-old woman argue that it was unlawful to detain and treat her, and that the medical authorities contravened the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act. Miss S says that as a result of being denied her legal right to oppose the action of the medical authorities she suffered physical and mental anguish and humiliation.

The case was adjourned yesterday by Mr Justice Stuart-White, who said that another judge more experienced in judicial review applications should take his place.

Lord Lester of Herne Hill, QC, told the court that an uninformed media campaign was threatening to damage the reputation of the social

worker who had formally applied for Miss S to be detained in hospital. He said that his client, Louise Collins, employed by the London Borough of Merton, had been called by a GP who had expressed fears about the mental state of Miss S—then about 36 weeks pregnant. Lord Lester read a statement from Ms Collins in which she said Miss S had been adamant that she would not accept any treatment for pre-eclampsia, a dangerous condition involving high blood pressure. When told that both she and her unborn baby would probably die, Miss S had said: "So be it."

The social worker said that Miss S referred several times "to how she would be glad to punish her ex-partner and hoped he would feel

guilty if she died". She "talked about not wanting the baby now the relationship was over, but was unable to explain how she was going to be delivered of the baby without intervention". Ms Collins's statement added: "It was as if she wanted to wish it away or have it die."

Miss S, whose ten-month-old daughter was at nursery yesterday, indicated more than once that "a dead baby would be a solution as she in no way wanted it", the court was told. Ms Collins and two doctors agreed that intervention was required under the 1983 Mental Health Act and it would have been negligent not to respond to "Miss S's clear need for help".

Outside court Miss S said: "I was prepared to take the risk that both of

us would die for principles I feel very strongly about." She was not disappointed with the judge's decision to adjourn the case and said: "I don't mind if I have to wait a couple of months or even a couple of years. It is that important to me."

Miss S said she disliked medical procedures and wanted a home birth. "Pregnancy is a natural process. I don't believe in ending it in the environment of a hospital with all the pressures and lack of privacy," she said. "People had been having babies for many years before hospitals were on the scene."

"It is a matter of public concern that hospitals can use underhand means to force patients to have treatment they have quite clearly stated they don't wish to have."

Police chief's wife says she stands by her man

By ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY AND MARK HENDERSON



Ryan: accused officer of spreading gossip

THE wife of the former police officer appointed to clean up Australia's most corrupt force made an extraordinary public statement yesterday to deny rumours that their marriage had broken down. Adrienne Ryan, whose embattled husband, Peter, was appointed the New South Wales police commissioner last year, sent an open letter to a Sydney newspaper to tell him: "Sweetheart, I love you. Don't let the bastards grind you down."

Mrs Ryan's statement, which was splashed across the front page of the Sydney Daily Telegraph, followed allegations that she had returned to Britain because their marriage was in trouble. She insisted: "I adore my husband, for he is all that anyone could ask of a husband and a father: devoted, loving and caring without reservation and we have a strong and enduring marriage."

"If it were not so then I would not be able to be in England now in order to complete my education."

Mrs Ryan is renting a cottage in Sheffield on

Loddon, Hampshire, while she completes a degree in politics and international relations at Reading University. "I wanted to respond and make my position absolutely clear—that I love Peter and there's no way I would leave him," she said. "People obviously thought they could hurt him like this but he's made of stronger stuff than that."

Her husband, 52, accused officers opposed to his reforms of spreading the rumours. Attending a police commissioners' conference in Tasmania, he said the smears would not stop him continuing to root out corruption.

"This is a deliberate attempt to destabilise me because of

the reform process," he said. "We're obviously getting close to the targets."

Mrs Ryan said she would rejoin her husband for good when she finished her degree in June. Mr Ryan said the smear campaign would not dissuade him and his family from remaining in Australia. "The idea of coming here was to build a life for ourselves and become Australian citizens, and that is what we intend to do," he said.

A Royal Commission investigating the New South Wales force has uncovered so many problems that many observers believe Mr Ryan has an impossible task.

On his arrival from England, where he had been Chief Constable of Norfolk Constabulary, he told fellow officers to get out if they resented his changes. Two of the state's highest-ranking officers were sacked soon after and several more were dismissed or demoted. Mr Ryan, a Lancastrian, has also fallen foul of an "anti-Pom" campaign.

Earlier last year he applied to become Chief Constable of Lancashire, where he spent the first 20 years of his career, but he was overlooked in favour of Pauline Clare, the first woman chief constable.



Adrienne Ryan, who wrote to a Sydney paper denying claims of a marital split

Britain invents new time machine

By NICK NUTTALL TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

AN ATOMIC clock a thousand times more accurate than the best now available is being developed by British scientists. The clock, which could become the standard for timekeeping in the 21st century, is based on the properties of a rare-earth metal called ytterbium when pulsed with laser light.

Dr Mat Roberts, of the Government's National Physical Laboratory in Teddington, west London, said the clock would improve satellite navigation systems and scientific measurements and make radio telescopes more accurate.

Existing atomic clocks, which are the standard for international timekeeping, are based on the element caesium. Scientists found that if a caesium atom were bathed in microwaves, its electrons would leap to higher energy levels, emitting light as they degraded. By precisely tuning the frequency of the microwaves, a maximum number of electrons are flipped up to higher energy levels. This frequency, accurate to within half of a thousandth of a second per day, defines the modern second.

The researchers at Teddington, whose findings are published today in the Institute of Physics's magazine *Opto and Laser Europe*, have taken the technique a

big step forward by using ytterbium. The team first decided to freeze an atom of the element, which was done by holding one in a force field called an ion trap. An ultraviolet laser was shone on the charged atom, which cooled it to just above absolute zero. Another laser was shone at the atom which, if precisely tuned, would cause an electron to flip up to a higher energy state.

The frequency of the laser, oscillating 600 million million times a second, needs to be tuned with absolute precision to achieve this phenomenon. Otherwise the electron will stay put. The team believes the precision required will define a new standard of time.

Scientists protest at patents on nature

PLANS by the European Commission to allow patents on a wide range of living objects have been attacked by British scientists as threatening the basis of scientific research (Nigel Hawkes writes). Professor Jacqueline McGlade, of Warwick University, told the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Seattle that the new directive from Brussels would make it possible to "patent nature wholesale". "We have

perfectly good patent regulations in Europe. I want this new directive blocked."

A group of leading British scientists has written a strong letter to *Nature*. It is understood to say that instead of helping biotechnology to make a responsible contribution to medicine and agriculture, "the directive threatens the foundations of scientific research—free access to material and freedom to pursue promising lines of inquiry."

Why one woman's drink may be her child's poison

CHRONIC lead poisoning, or plumbism, has always been of more interest to the doctor than the detective. The changes that lead poisoning induces in an adult are so slow that no wicked heir who wanted to lay his hands on the family riches would be likely to make it his preferred poison.

The symptoms develop insidiously, although in time the patient will develop irreversible kidney damage. The first signs are headaches, vague abdominal pains associated with anorexia and nausea, and, most obviously, personality changes.

In children the onset of lead poisoning may be much more dramatic, with evidence of acute encephalopathy (headaches, convulsions and delirium). Whether it comes on slowly or rapidly, it can cause lasting intellectual impairment.

Low-grade lead poisoning is a danger to children if they are able to lick or chew woodwork decorated with old paints; if their water supply comes

through lead rather than copper pipes; and if, before unleaded petrol became readily available, they lived too close to a main road. Playing on soil contaminated by lead is another source of poisoning. The *Archives of Disease in Childhood* has recently published an analysis of congenital neurological abnormalities in children born in Lancashire. The researchers found an association between lead levels in the water and the likelihood that mothers would have babies with neural tube defects, whether spina bifida, hydrocephalus or an absence of parts of the brain.

Where there is excess lead, the mother may suffer from having too little zinc, which is

needed by the body if it is to absorb folic acid. A woman who is deprived of folic acid when pregnant is likely to have a child who is not only more prone to abnormalities of the brain and spinal cord but, recent research suggests, hare-lip and cleft palate as well.

The research found a link between wealth and levels of lead in water. The more deprived a mother's background, the more likely it is that the level of lead in the water supply will be high, and the higher the incidence of babies who suffer neurological abnormalities.

The obvious immediate action is to persuade all women, rich and poor, to take additional folic acid before they think of becoming pregnant. The research also teaches doctors that it is unwise to make assumptions without first inquiring into the reasons why these have become accepted truths.

It has long been assumed that babies born to women who come from disadvantaged backgrounds are smaller and have a higher incidence of congenital malformation. This has always been attributed to nature, but the research involving the Lancashire women shows that it was a consequence of nurture and that their water supply may have been to blame.



Dr Thomas Stuttford

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Labour not crying over Lloyd Webber threat to emigrate

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

SEVERAL Labour MPs last night rapturously applauded suggestions that Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber will leave Britain if Tony Blair wins the general election. They claim the threat increases Labour's hopes of victory.

The multimillionaire composer, reported to be considering emigrating rather than live in a Labour-run Britain, was given a rousing, if premature, send-off in the Commons, in which his work was described as "pretty forgettable, chocolate-box stuff". A small band of Labour MPs tabled a motion claiming that Sir Andrew's reported intention provided an extra incentive to vote Labour and that they "look forward to Sir Andrew keeping his promise". Tony Banks, the leader of the left-wing group, said that Sir Andrew's threat was "arrogant in the extreme" and he would like to see the back of him "because that's the best view". Michael Heseltine, the

Deputy Prime Minister, seized on Sir Andrew's threat to suggest that there might be a repetition of the "brain drain" which led wealthy Britons to emigrate during the last Labour Government.

Sir Andrew, who is estimated to be worth £550 million and who was given a peerage in the New Year's Honours List, was reported last week as saying: "What on earth happens if Labour gets in with a huge majority and a whole lot of loonies get in at the same time?"

Mr Heseltine said that Sir Andrew was right to be fearful of a Labour government. It's a classic example of someone who's done extraordinarily well. He's a man who has brought huge revenues and prestige to this country, and who is seriously thinking of leaving if Labour were to be elected. Of course there would be many more like him."

Mr Banks admitted he was not the biggest fan of Sir

Andrew's work. "Given his output, there are obviously going to be one or two pieces that he has composed that are fairly easy on the ear. But it's pretty forgettable, chocolate-box stuff. It's very commercial and has proved to be by the vast amount of money he has made. Nobody is going to cry for him."

"If these people who have done very well in this country think we are going to be concerned if they leave, that is nonsense."

Mr Banks's remarks sit uneasily with his role, declared in a Commons register, as an adviser to the Musicians' Union and the Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union, many of whose members have thrived on the success of Sir Andrew's musicals.

A spokesman for Sir Andrew yesterday denied that he had any plans to leave the country.



Julie-Anah Brighten and Alasdair Harvey, who will star in *Beauty and the Beast*

Disney aims to usurp kings of the West End

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE Disney Corporation is to produce the costliest musical to be staged in the West End, it announced yesterday. In a challenge to the kings of the British musical, Sir Cameron Mackintosh and Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, the company announced a £10 million production of *Beauty and the Beast*, and said it would be the first of many in Britain and the Continent.

The budget is about three times greater than Sir Cameron's *Oliver!* and *Sunset Boulevard* from Sir Andrew, who was ennobled in the New Year's Honours List. "I expect they'll be worried," Skip Malone, the vice-president of Disney Theatricals, said.

Disney's British stage debut, inspired by the success of its animated film, will be followed in October by a stage version of *The Lion King*. Both productions feature lyrics by Sir Tim Rice.

The American company is planning to establish permanent offices in London. If the

West End staging repeats its success on Broadway in 1994, when it recouped a similar investment in just over a year. Disney will look at touring the show throughout Britain and the Continent.

The West End debut was delayed while the company sought a big enough venue. Work is now under way at the Dominion Theatre, enlarging the backstage area to take the production. At least £5 million will be spent on the set and costumes.

Mr Malone said that after talking to British producers, Disney Theatricals chose instead to go into partnership with a German company, Stella Musical Productions. That company has staged musicals on the Continent, particularly its home country, which Mr Malone described as second in importance to only the West End market.

Mr Malone said that Disney would devote its energies to "family shows, not children's shows". He believed that the company's founder, Walt Disney, would have approved of the two-way relationship between the screen and stage. "He was all about quality and sometimes went against the trends." Initially, the company will concentrate on musicals but straight plays may follow.

Nick Allott, executive producer of Cameron Mackintosh Ltd, said he was pleased at Disney's announcement. "We welcome any new competition. The more competition there is, the healthier it is. In our experience, one hit begets another."

While some in the theatre world lament the musical's domination of Broadway and the West End, audiences continue to show a huge appetite for the genre. With producers struggling to make ends meet with conventional drama, Sir Cameron and Sir Andrew's productions continue to make millions. Sir Cameron has *Les Misérables*, *Miss Saigon*, *Oliver!* and *Martin Guerre* among more than 300 productions staged around the world over some 25 years. Sir Andrew's London production with Sir Cameron of *Cats* last year became the longest-running West End musical. Sir Andrew has broken records by having three musicals running in New York and three in London.

Beauty and the Beast opens in London on May 13, after previews from April 29. It will feature Alasdair Harvey as the Beast and Julie-Anah Brighten as Belle.

Arts, pages 37-39

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Sir Tim: lyrics wasted

Musicals depress me, says Sir Tim

SIR TIM RICE said yesterday he was "fed up" with musicals and much preferred to see a straight play.

The lyricist for *Evita*, who is involved in the Disney stage version of *Beauty and the Beast*, expressed despair that too many musicals were playing to audiences who "haven't a clue about what's going on". Lyrics were lost on coachloads of "people who speak only Japanese", he said, adding: "I am not wild about musicals as a genre. I would rather see a straight play nine times out of ten. I am fed up with the preaching-type musical. Some of them you come out wanting to shoot yourself, or the guy who wrote it. Not naming names, but some of them are really downbeat."

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Tories urge Major to confirm May 1 as election date

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

TORY MPs and ministers urged John Major yesterday to end speculation over the election date by making clear that it will be May 1.

They accept that he cannot formally make the announcement for several weeks. If he did he would appear to take the Ulster Unionists for granted as well as trigger election broadcasting rules that would automatically give the opposition parties equal air time.

But, buoyed up by their success on Monday in defeating Labour's attempt to force an early election, the Tories want the Prime Minister to indicate that he is intent on going to the country in May. They believe that they will benefit from a long campaign starting two or three weeks before the dissolution of Parliament.

Mr Major's speech to a local government rally on Saturday is seen as an early opportunity for him to tell the party faithful that he is intent on May 1.

The Conservative Central Council meeting on March 14

and 15 is the natural springboard for a May election: by then it will be too late to call a contest for April 10, the only other likely date.

Senior ministers are arguing that a May election would give the longest possible time for the memory of the expected defeat next week in the Wirral by-election to fade.

Labour leaders have again threatened to call a confidence vote after the Wirral result, but they will not carry out their threat unless the Ulster Unionists assure them that they will help to bring down the Government. Senior Tories calculate that the Unionists are unlikely to do so immediately after the by-election, if at all.

The Conservatives were voicing satisfaction that they had seen off the attempt on Monday to censure Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, so comfortably that they would have won even if the Unionists had voted against them.

One Labour MP who failed to make the vote, Ian David-

son (Glasgow Govan), was given a stern rebuke by Donald Dewar, the Chief Whip, yesterday. He had apparently attended a meeting of the Scottish Grand Committee in Montrose and tried unsuccessfully to travel to London in time for the vote.

But Tony Blair insisted that Labour's tactics had been vindicated. "What we have done is expose to the public the fact that he will have cost them the equivalent of 2p on the standard rate of income tax," he said.

Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, portrayed the vote and Mr Blair's reaction to it as a symbol of his unfitness to govern. Tory MPs revelled in the Labour leader's decision not to return to the Commons chamber to hear the outcome of the vote.

Dr Mawhinney, who was unveiling the latest Tory pre-election poster, featuring a claim that a Blair government would cost families an extra £2,300 a year in tax, said: "If you had seen Mr Blair's face as he walked out of the



Please sir: Michael Howard yesterday during a campaign visit to Higher Bebington School in Wirral South

chamber last night, looking humiliated, not even having the courage to stay for the announcement of the vote, you wouldn't have said, 'There's a man who's leading'."

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, said at the

same launch that Labour had "made fools of themselves". He said of Mr Blair: "The moment there's a whiff of danger he disappears. I was amazed that Tony Blair left John Prescott out to dry and disappeared from sight. He

was supposed to be leading the troops."

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, who was campaigning in Wirral South yesterday, dropped another May 1 hint. "There is a great deal of life left in this Government and we

have a great deal still to do," he said.

Referring to the vote, he said: "It shows how utterly incompetent Labour are. They didn't consult the other parties and they are left with a great deal of egg on their faces."

Prescott angered by spin doctors

By JILL SHERMAN

JOHN PRESCOTT joined a Shadow Cabinet row over the privatisation of the Tote yesterday with an attack on Labour's spin-doctor.

The deputy leader said that when party aides had floated an idea it did not mean it was Labour policy. "I wish somebody could stop them," he told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme.

Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, and Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, were also angry that a story in the *Sunday Telegraph* that Labour was planning to sell off the Tote was confirmed by a senior adviser to Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor.

The aide briefed reporters on Sunday and gave further details about how much the sale would bring in, saying that £400 million to £500 million could be raised to spend on health and education services.

Aides from Tony Blair's office did not deny the story, but made clear that it was only an option, not policy. It took another 24 hours, after an angry reaction from the racing community, before Robin Cook, a racing enthusiast, killed the story, saying: "There will be no proposal by Labour to sell the Tote."

The debacle will heighten the tension between Mr Cook and Mr Brown. Relations between them have never been good and the Shadow Foreign Secretary was clearly irritated that he had not been consulted about something on which he was such an expert.

Although the Mr Brown's aide was being blamed yesterday, it was clear that the Shadow Chancellor knew about the story on Sunday and did nothing to stop it.

IN PARLIAMENT

TODAY in the Commons: from 9.30am, backbench debates. From 2.30pm, trade and industry questions: local security, benefits, pensions and contributions of dentists; backbench debate on ruralist supplements on the Welsh prescription list. In the Lords: debates on privatised utilities regulation; child abuse; operation of the Minister's treaty.

Unwieldy government needs cutting down to size

The Government has too many ministers and the House of Commons too many MPs. This view is gaining support and not just from senior MPs after they have announced their intention to retire. So I was cheered when I read in the *Express* on Sunday that John Major was considering a radical shake-up so that "more than 150 MPs and 30 ministers could be axed".

Unfortunately, the Tories are not likely to propose anything as radical in their manifesto. Admittedly, some ministers are sympathetic to these ideas. Roger Freeman has been the only Cabinet minister publicly to back a slimmer House, though Lord Cranborne has dropped a few hints that perhaps

the Commons should look to the flaws in its own House before proposing reconstruction of the Lords. Leading political academics such as Professor Philip Norton of Hull have also discussed reducing the size of the Commons. But the Tory leadership seems unwilling to challenge its own MPs so dramatically at this stage.

What ministers have discussed, at their strategy meeting at Chequers three weeks ago, is a restructuring of Whitehall to reduce the number of departments, and possibly also ministers. At present there are 84 ministers and whips in the Commons, compared with 33 a century ago when Whitehall ruled an Empire covering a third of the earth. The disappearance of the

MODEL ON POLITICS

Empire has, of course, been offset by a vast extension of the State's role.

But since 1979 central government has sought to pull back via privatisation, contracting out, a big reduction in the number of civil servants and the Next Steps executive agencies running large areas of administration. Some departments have disappeared — Energy into Trade and Industry, and Employment into Education — though a new one, National Heritage, has, less successfully, been created. But there has been no reduction in the overall number of ministers. Trade

and Industry still has seven despite the privatisation of virtually all the old nationalised industries, while the Treasury has five. Having coped with painful cuts in Civil Service numbers, most permanent secretaries I know believe that ministerial teams should also be slimmed down. One volunteered which ministers could go in his department.

So any reshuffle of departmental responsibilities — perhaps involving agriculture, transport and broadcasting — will only be convincing if it is accompanied by a reduction in the number of ministers. The present total has more to do with satisfying the ambitions of career politicians and with the patronage of the whips than with

the needs of government. But a slimmer executive should also be accompanied by a slimmer legislature. The Commons has risen from 625 in the 1950s to 659 after the election following various boundary reviews. This is unwieldy. The only larger elected chamber is the German Bundestag following unification, though many other countries have a federal structure with regional assemblies. If devolution is implemented here, there would be an ever stronger case not just for ending the over-representation of Scotland, but also for reducing the size of the Commons to, say, 450 to 500. Of course, many MPs will be worried about losing their seats but a change could be phased in and accompany the regular boundary

reviews when many members anyway retire.

Labour has proposals for making the Commons more effective, but has not proposed any reduction in the number of ministers or MPs. Indeed, its current shadow team is 100 strong and Tony Blair will not want to disappoint all those eager shadows who have been waiting so long for office. The Liberal Democrats have been prepared to address these issues and they are the only national party to advocate fewer ministers and fewer MPs, but they have had no ministers since the wartime coalition and no more than a couple of dozen MPs for 60 years.

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Netanyahu dismissed charges as "nonsense"

Netanyahu questioned by police on scandal

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE Israeli Prime Minister was last night questioned formally by police for the first time in their investigations into an alleged political corruption scandal surrounding the short-lived appointment of an Attorney-General.

Benjamin Netanyahu was questioned in his Jerusalem office. The investigation stems from a report by Israel Television that Aryeh Deri, leader of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party and member of the ruling coalition, had agreed to support the pullout of Israeli troops from Hebron in return for the appointment of Roni Bar-On as Attorney-General and if a plea bargain was arranged in Mr Deri's own fraud and bribery case that is before the courts. The charges have so far been unsupported.

Mr Netanyahu has dismissed them as "nonsense" and has accused the television station of left-wing bias. Mr Bar-On was an obscure lawyer and a former football club chairman before his appointment. He resigned after two days in the post as legal and political leaders charged that he was unsuitable for the job.

□ Villages shelled: Israeli and allied militia forces shelled three south Lebanon villages, killing a woman and wounding two other people, security sources said. The shelling was in breach of a US-brokered ceasefire deal last April that bans the Hezbollah and Israeli and its allied militia from targeting civilian areas. (Reuters)

Russia seeks to strengthen Middle East peace role

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

YASSIR ARAFAT, the Palestinian leader, had talks yesterday in the Kremlin with President Yeltsin at the start of a two-day visit seen as part of an effort to revive Russia's flagging role in the Middle East peace process.

A beaming Mr Yeltsin, looking fit and energetic despite reports of continuing ill health, was shown on television, striding to meet the Palestinian leader. The two men embraced, before Mr Arafat reached up to plant three kisses on his host's forehead.

During the meeting, which Mr Arafat later described as "very warm and friendly", Mr Yeltsin reiterated his determination that "Russia will continue intensive efforts to promote the settlement of differences and the establishment of peace and good neighbourly relations in the region".

Mr Arafat's visit is expected to be followed next month by

a trip to Moscow by Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister.

The Interfax news agency said that Mr Arafat, who later met Yevgeni Primakov, the Foreign Minister, and Gennadi Seleznyov, the Chairman of the State Duma, had emphasised that Russia had a most important role to play in assuring stability and security in the Middle East.

"Mr Arafat's visit should be viewed in the context of a further deepening of Russian-Palestinian co-operation aimed at advancing the peace process," a Foreign Ministry official was quoted as saying.

Russia is a co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process, along with the United States, but Moscow's influence in the region has plummeted since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The appointment of Mr Primakov, an Arab specialist, to replace Andrei Kozyrev at the Foreign Ministry last year, was widely regarded as a signal of Russia's determination to take a more assertive role in Middle East affairs.

Mr Primakov, who had earlier worked as chief of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service, had a reputation as a friend of some of the more radical leaders of the Arab world, including Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi President.

During his talks with Mr Arafat, which are due to continue today, Mr Primakov expressed Russia's support for the Palestinian leadership's policy of negotiation with Israel.

□ Journalist punished: The Kremlin yesterday took away the accreditation of a journalist who reported that Mr Yeltsin's wife, Naina, had asked him to step down for health reasons. Sergei Yastrzhembsky, a Kremlin spokesman, said the daily *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, which published the story on Monday, had been asked to change "its" Kremlin correspondent. (AFP)



Despite continuing reports of ill health, President Yeltsin was on hand to greet Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, at the Kremlin yesterday where Mr Arafat had talks with Yevgeni Primakov, the Foreign Minister

Japan to seek extradition of five Red Army guerrillas from Beirut

FROM ROBERT WHYMAN IN TOKYO AND MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

JAPAN plans to request the extradition of five Red Army guerrillas arrested in Lebanon, among them a key figure in the 1972 Lod airport massacre that left 24 people dead. The five and three supporters, all Japanese, were captured by Lebanese authorities in raids on hideouts in the Bekaa Valley, the Red Army's base since the early 1970s.

Japan's National Police Agency has sent a team to Lebanon to confirm the identities of the group, believed to include five terrorists on the international wanted list. Lebanese officials say one is Kozo Okamoto, 49, sought for the machinegun and grenade attack at Tel Aviv's Lod Airport. Also in custody are Kazuo Tohira, 44, the Red Army's master passport forger, who was arrested in Stockholm in early 1975, and extradited to Japan. He was later released by Japan in a deal to free hostages when the US

Consulate in Kuala Lumpur was seized in August 1975.

The Red Army achieved notoriety for 20 terrorist attacks including the September 1977 hijacking of a Japan Airlines plane in Dhaka. Still at large are Fumiko Shigenobu, who founded the group in Lebanon in 1971 with the support of Palestinian factions, and seven others on the international wanted list.

According to Japanese police, the group counts no more than 40 active members who find it increasingly difficult to operate. Its last confirmed terrorist incident was the 1988 bombing of an American military base in Naples. The end of the Cold War, the collapse of communist regimes, and the momentum of the Middle East peace process has deprived the guerrillas of operational bases and safe havens. By contrast groups such as the pro-Iranian

Hezbollah organisation, which has its stronghold in the Bekaa Valley, remain valuable to Damascus and Tehran.

For the Governments of Lebanon and Syria — without whose consent the new arrests could not have been made — the Red Army's Bekaa presence has become an embarrassment. Four years ago the guerrillas began scouring Asia and Latin America for new hideouts. Three senior members have been caught in Romania, Peru, Nepal in the past two years.

The arrests will have delighted the Beirut Government, which is working hard to shed Lebanon's image as a terrorist haven, seeking to boost its tourism industry and win international investment for an ambitious postwar reconstruction programme. They could not have been made without the consent of Syria, which has 40,000 troops in Lebanon.

India to deport Sobhraj

Delhi: The Indian Government decided yesterday to drop all pending cases against the famed criminal Charles Sobhraj and pressed for his speedy deportation to France.

A prosecutor said his presence in India was prejudicial to the state. Two cases pending against Sobhraj concern a lapsed Thai extradition request and the other stems from a 1986 jailbreak that earned him fame. (Reuters)

Algeria toll rises

Algiers: About 30 men shot, hacked or burnt to death 33 villagers in Blida, south of the capital, as battles intensified between the army and Muslim militants. Nearly a bomb killed a railway engineer. (AP)

President ill

Colombo: President Bandaranaike Kumaramanga of Sri Lanka is in hospital with a stomach ailment, but it is not thought to be serious, officials said. She will be 81 in April. (AP)

Erotic initiative

Cairo: An unabridged Arabic four-volume edition of *1001 Nights*, including the erotic scenes, has been published in Egypt for the first time, based on a text published in Calcutta in 1819. (AFP)

Death sentence

Harare: George Chikwamure and Nyenyai Mudenge were sentenced to death after killing a villager they abducted at random. A businessman paid £150 for his brain — seen as a lucky charm. (AFP)

Hubble ready

Houston: Servicing and repairs to the Hubble space telescope have been completed and the *Discovery* shuttle was taking it to an orbit nine miles higher before releasing it into free flight early today. (AP)

Bean runners

Berne: Swiss authorities are closing in on a smuggling operation illegally transporting thousands of tonnes of vegetables, including potatoes and beans, into the country from Italy. (Reuters)

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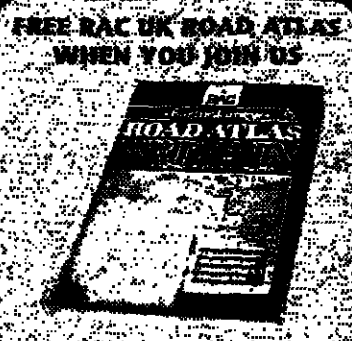
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Reprieve for Clintons as Whitewater scourge quits

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

KENNETH STARR, once seen by the White House as a demon sent to torment President Clinton, was yesterday dubbed "Clinton's lucky Starr".

Mr Starr's unexpected decision to step down as special prosecutor for the Whitewater affair is widely interpreted as a sign that his 2½-year investigation has failed to build a strong criminal case against the President or the First Lady.

While Mr Starr said yesterday that nothing should be read into his departure, the White House was ecstatic. "There are a lot of smiles around here today," said one aide.

During Monday's national holiday of Presidents Day, it emerged that Mr Starr had decided to leave the Whitewater investigation by August 1 to become dean of Pepperdine University in Malibu, California, as well as the founding dean of its new school of public policy.

He told *The New York Times*: "I would read nothing into this [his departure] except it is an extraordinary opportunity for me. That it came when it did is merely a happy coincidence and I had no control over the timing."

However, that explanation, coming from a man who has spent his recent professional life pouring scorn on claims of coincidence, has done nothing to dispel speculation. Many Democrats argued yesterday that he would not be stepping down if he was on the verge of

bringing criminal charges, nor would he want to surrender the glory to his successor. "You don't spend 2½ years and \$35 million (£22 million) and recommend you prosecute, but don't do it yourself. It doesn't make any sense," said one Administration official.

Some Republicans argued, however, that he may well be preparing to hand the case over to associates. Some involved in the investigation noted that his departure would have little effect as he had not carried out the prosecution of any of the Whitewater-related cases, nor would he have done so in the future.

The tortuous investigation began as an inquiry into the Clintons' failed Whitewater land deal in Arkansas and the suicide of Vincent Foster, the White House deputy counsel.



Starr says timing of decision is coincidence

However, it quickly spread into a medley of intertwined inquiries: Arkansas financial dealings by the Clintons and their friends; whether anyone in the White House obstructed these investigations with withholding evidence; the White

House's use of FBI files on Republicans; the dismissal of the White House travel office staff in 1993; and fundraising for Mr Clinton's election campaign in Arkansas.

Mr Starr's most significant Whitewater victory was the conviction in a fraud case of Jim Guy Tucker, a former Arkansas Governor and Democrat, together with the Clintons' former business partners James and Susan McDougal. However, his investigation suffered a setback with the partial acquittal of two Arkansas bankers accused of conspiring to conceal large cash withdrawals by Mr Clinton's 1990 campaign for the state governorship.

Republicans were also disappointed that no charges were brought against the Clintons before last November's presidential elections. Some argued that he had simply restrained himself from taking such a politically-charged step in the run-up to the election.

To many, however, that argument seemed suspect, given Mr Starr's aggression as an investigator.

It may be that another special prosecutor will be appointed and criminal charges against the Clintons may follow. In retrospect, however, Mr Starr's failure to bring indictments before the election may seem the first sign that his investigation would end not with a bang, but a fizzle.

Leading article, page 19



The brown tree snake, whose fellows have already wiped out nine of the 11 species of birds native to Guam

New threat slithers towards America

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

AMERICA is facing a threat to its shores from a slithering predator capable of destroying whole populations.

The brown tree snake, *Boiga irregularis*, although not lethal for humans, has killed 17 species of animal in the American territory of Guam, including nine of the island's 11 native birds. And the voracious reptile, which often reaches a length of 10ft, is thought to be making steady progress towards the United States.

It was recently sighted on Saipan in the northern Marianas and could soon reach

Hawaii. Officials fear that the snake, which has a habit of hiding in ships and aircraft, could then simply slink from the Pacific to the American mainland.

The US Government is so concerned that President Clinton has set aside \$15 million (£9.28 million) of his proposed budget to increase border patrols and for the development of chemicals to combat the beast.

"What is at stake is the ecology of many islands in the Pacific and there is a danger for America as well," Tom Fritts, of the Interior Department, said. A native

of Australia, where it is kept in check by parasites, the coffee-coloured snake spread to the Pacific islands on military planes and cargo ships after the Second World War. In Guam, where it has no natural enemies, its population reached 30,000 a square mile before levelling off at 12,000 a square mile in some forested regions.

In the decades since its arrival, the reptile has wiped out such beautiful species as the Mariana fruit dove, the Micronesian kingfisher and the Micronesian honeycreeper.

Castro throws a party for Hollywood cigar-lovers

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

CUBA'S Marxist President, Fidel Castro, has invited some of Hollywood's flashiest stars to Havana for a few days of cigar smoking and inhaling the comradely airs at the Tropicana Club.

The official purpose of next week's party is to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Cohiba, the strong, slow-burning cigar which Señor Castro made famous in his smoking days, although he has now given up.

Invitations have gone out quietly to 100 prominent Americans, including the film actors Jack Nicholson, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Danny DeVito, Matt Dillon and the cheroot-fancying mannequin, Linda Evangelista. Leading businessmen, who may want discreetly to invest a dollar or two, were also said to be on the invitation list.

The United States normally prohibits its citizens from travelling to Cuba, which it has long regarded as a hostile nation, but it was understood that the guests for the grand Cohiba party have got around the regulations, possibly by getting a third party to pay for their flights. A Spanish tobacco wholesaler is underwriting much of the cost of the Cuban extravaganza.

Before it was put on the market in 1966, the Cohiba was made exclusively for Señor Castro and his cronies. When sufficiently impressed at official receptions, he would reach inside his fatigues and produce a Cohiba as a reward for visiting dignitaries. There are smoother smokes than the Cohiba, which is better suited to the palate of revolutionaries than it is to tender Western tastes, yet it remains one of the

most sought-after names in humidifier-polishing circles.

Chris O'Hara, of New York's *Smoke* magazine, which has been invited to the Havana party, described the Cohiba yesterday as "pretty harsh but easily the most desired Cuban cigar: celebrities and tycoons love it". Havanas are illegal in the United States, but contraband boxes of Cohibas, containing 25 cigars, sell for as much as \$800 (£495). There is also a steady trade in counterfeit Cohibas.

Because of the sensitivity of the Cuban question in America, there was no immediate confirmation of who among those invited had risked public opprobrium and had accepted Señor Castro's invitation.

Tickets for the beano will cost \$500 each, enough to keep a Cuban family for a good year. For American visitors, the Cuban trip will at least afford the rare joy of being allowed to smoke openly in public without incurring blasts of disapproval from anti-tobacco campaigners, oxygen freaks, health fascists and various other professional whingers.

John Kavulich, head of the US-Cuba Trade and Economic Council, said that he believed that all those who had accepted were "going legally". Richard Sachs, a Florida stockbroker, told the *Sun-Sentinel* newspaper of Fort Lauderdale that "to someone who smokes cigars, it is like going to the Oscars".



Castro in his smoking days and Linda Evangelista, the cheroot-fancying model invited to the party



Anti-mafia Bill pinched by thieves

Buenos Aires: Thieves yesterday stole the draft of an anti-mafia law from the offices of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies, officials said.

They copied dozens of computer files to disks, then erased files from the computers, said Santiago Rossi, an aide to Miguel Angel Toma, the chairman of the parliamentary defence committee. In addition to the draft Bill, among the lost files was background information on anti-mafia legislation in the United States and Italy.

The thieves, who got past a double lock on the door, took a fax machine and a television set to try to throw off investigators, Señor Rossi said. (AFP)

Cattle and deer perish as Midwest freezes

BY QUENTIN LETTS

THOUSANDS of deer and cattle have died across the northern plains of the American Midwest after a winter of rare severity.

Wild whitetail have entered built-up areas in search of food and frozen pheasant have plummeted from the skies, killed by prolonged spells of sub-zero temperatures and deep snow.

Minnesota and the Dakotas have been hardest hit, with ranchers losing more than 11,000 head of cattle in North Dakota alone. South Dakota has had 25ft of snow since the start of winter.

In what has been described as the worst winter for 102 years, wind-chill has been an added hazard, with icy gusts persisting for days on end. The major interstate highways have been closed eight times and President Clinton declared North Dakota a disaster area, making it eligible for federal funds.

Country-sports enthusiasts, so often depicted as cruel, have been leading humanitarian efforts to help the hard-hit deer. Farmers watched at first in irritation as the hungry

deer entered barns to eat stored hay bales. As the bone-chilling winter has continued, many farmers have taken pity on the whitetail deer and have voluntarily fed them.

State authorities have dropped tonnes of corn in remote areas as food for the stricken wildlife. In Minnesota, the state capital has seen local politicians debating emergency measures for deer.

Bruce Meyer, a farmer with 600 acres in Appleton, western Minnesota, said: "I don't know how many bushels of corn the deer have eaten so far. It has gotten so bad that at times I have 30 in the yard, jumping fences and getting in with the cattle to get at their feed. The deer aren't even afraid of me. I can walk to within 20ft of them. The other day, I got on a snowmobile and chased them away. But they are eating a lot of food."

Evergreen trees as tall as 16ft have been stripped bare by the ravenous deer. LeVonne Gloege, a farmer's wife in Odessa, told the *Star Tribune* newspaper that she had lost 200 trees to the deer.

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Albright proposes joint Nato-Russia peacekeeping unit

By MICHAEL EVANS AND LEVIA LINTON

MADEIRAINE ALBRIGHT, the US Secretary of State, proposed yesterday that Nato and Russia form a joint brigade for peacekeeping and crisis management missions.

She outlined the proposal during a statement to Nato's North Atlantic Council in Brussels, the first time she had addressed the alliance's top decision-making body since her appointment.

Although the idea of forming a Nato/Russian brigade of about 5,000 soldiers has been discussed within the alliance over the past three months, this latest idea for forging closer practical links with the Russian armed forces had not been made public.

Ms Albright's support for the concept came in a statement which underlined a personal commitment to build a new security partnership with Russia at the same time as pushing ahead with Nato's plans for enlargement.

Nato sources said the idea of forming a brigade followed directly on from the experience in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where Russian troops have served alongside alliance forces.

Nato wants to ensure that after the Bosnia operation is over, the peacekeeping partnership between alliance and Russian troops is maintained.

Ms Albright said: "We could begin immediately to develop a joint Nato/Russian brigade."

Nato sources said there were a number of options being considered. Although it was unlikely that there would be a standing brigade permanently on standby, units who would train together could be

formed. The question of command and control would have to be resolved depending on the nature of the operation and the countries contributing troops, they said.

The Russians have already been apprised of this new idea, along with other proposals including an exchange of military officers at the main command headquarters.

Ms Albright, who will soon be meeting Yevgeny Primakov, the Russian Foreign Minister, told the North Atlantic Council yesterday that Russia had legitimate concerns about Nato enlargement "that are being met".

She said it was envisaged that a Nato-Russia Joint Council would be formed which would "promote a regular dialogue on major security issues, reach concerted decisions where possible and seize opportunities for joint action".

She said she recognised that Russian leaders opposed the enlargement and "that this is not likely to change".

However, she was adamant

that the alliance should not waver from its intentions to offer membership to several Central European countries at the Nato summit in Madrid in July. "Our goal is an undivided Europe," she said. "We must ensure that every European democracy, whether it joins Nato sooner, later or not at all, has a role. This includes Russia."

She said a "critical task" in the weeks ahead was to build a partnership with Russia from which both Moscow and Europe would clearly benefit.

Later, at a press conference, Ms Albright said that Russia should be a "full participant" of Nato, but without a veto. "Russia will have a voice but Russia will not have a veto," she said.

She said a joint military brigade was still only a "concept", but added: "I would hope that it would have a real purpose."

She said that membership negotiations should be completed by the end of the year so that the first new members could join the alliance by 1999, which is Nato's fiftieth anniversary.

She refused to comment on the cost of enlarging Nato. President Clinton is due to make an announcement about the estimated cost in a report to the US Congress in a few days.

Nato sources said that Ms Albright's first visit to the Brussels headquarters since becoming Secretary of State had confirmed her to be a resolute and determined personality, which was welcomed by all the member states.

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Albright: her resolve was welcomed by Nato

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Veteran stars Lauren Bacall and Alain Delon fail to shine for Berlin Film Festival critics who panned their new film, directed by a novice.

Tears of mirth for philosopher's 'weepie'

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

FRANCE'S highest-profile intellectual was trying to remain philosophical yesterday after his debut as a feature film director received one of the most savage drubbings in recent cinema history.

Hundreds in the audience walked out before the end of the world premiere of Bernard-Henri Lévy's *Le Jour et La Nuit* at the Berlin Film Festival on Monday. Many who remained burst into spontaneous applause and hoots of mirth at the moment when the film's hero dies by blowing himself up in a hot-air balloon. M. Lévy had promised the audience it would leave in tears, but he meant of sorrow.

Boasting an all-star cast including Alain Delon, Lauren Bacall and Arielle Dombasle, the director's actress-model wife, the film was financed with French

and European public funds, shot in Mexico and billed — most energetically by M. Lévy himself — as a breakthrough in French cinema. Instead it has been panned as vapid, pretentious and semi-pornographic. One critic, Gérard Lefort, said it had the "subtlety of a bulldozer".

M. Delon, in an understatement that sparked fresh derision, told a packed news conference: "I get the impression some of you did not like the film." Miss Bacall refused to say if it ranked among her professional highlights. "That's an interesting question," she hedged.

M. Lévy insisted that the attacks "tell us more about the state of mind of the people writing them than about the quality of the film". But they also say much about the state of the French film industry, and M. Lévy's waning reput-

ation as France's premier intellectual. As a novelist, documentary-maker, playwright, pundit and moral arbiter, BHL, as he is usually known, has garnered greater publicity and more enemies than any other modern French philosopher.

Some detractors have pointed out that only in the clique-ridden French art world would an untried film-maker have been given the backing to write, cast and direct a movie principally on the basis of his name and high-level contacts.

Abuse directed at BHL has reached such a level that his allies have felt moved to defend him. The writer Françoise Giroud, who co-wrote a book about love with M. Lévy, described the "cabal" against him as "grotesque".

But even she conceded: "BHL is no Jean-Luc Godard."



Lévy: his intellectual reputation on wane

Road race craze brings terror to autobahn

By ROGER BOYES

A NEW craze for high-speed races on the autobahn network is bringing chaos to German motorways and twice this week has resulted in serious injuries.

The races take place at night and the drivers are often well-

heeled teenagers with their own BMWs and Toyotas. In the early hours of Monday morning, 11 youths with freshly polished Volkswagen Golfs, Opels, Hondas, and BMWs met in a layby near Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhr, the industrial heartland of Germany. Within minutes of their rendezvous, they were speeding three abreast along a double lane on the A42; they had covered nine miles when the race ended in a disastrous pile-up.

Yesterday, almost 48 hours after the race, police were still clearing away the debris which was spread over a 100-

yard area. The first driver had smashed into the back of a 27-year-old woman's Mercedes; both were badly injured. The racers were driving almost bumper to bumper and were unable to brake in time. All the youths were in hospital yesterday; while police waited to interview them.

There are piecemeal policies and initiatives on Cyprus or Turkey, Albania or Bulgaria," Signor Fassino said. "But

Italy attacks West's lack of coherent policy on Mediterranean security

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

ITALY yesterday deplored the lack of a "coherent Western security policy" in the increasingly troubled and volatile eastern Mediterranean and complained that it was having to shoulder much of the burden in shoring up stability.

Piero Fassino, the Deputy Foreign Minister, said there was "no European policy to speak of" in the region, where countries from Albania and Bulgaria to Algeria and Turkey were in ferment.

"There are piecemeal policies and initiatives on Cyprus or Turkey, Albania or Bulgaria," Signor Fassino said. "But

there is no overall strategic vision. We need a European policy, first, and then we need clear agreement between Europe and the United States. In the absence of a consensus, Italy will continue to take the lead. But we do not want to pursue a policy on our own."

Signor Fassino, 47, regarded as one of the sharpest brains in Italian diplomacy, has travelled extensively in the region since the Centre-Left came to power in Italy nearly a year ago. He is also a rising star in Italian politics.

His remarks come at a time of tension between France and

the United States over the future of the Nato Mediterranean command in Naples. Signor Fassino said Italy was working closely with the United States over Albania, where Italy had a "special historical role" because of its colonisation and subsequent military occupation of the country under Mussolini.

Albania is 40 miles across the Adriatic from Italy and reminders of the country's colonial rule have survived the Communist decades of isolation: every town has an Italianate town hall or library — all sadly dilapidated — and

many of the grandiose buildings lining the Boulevard of the Martyrs in Tirana date from the Fascist era.

Italian is more commonly spoken there than English or German and the Italian press still refers to Shkodra as "Scutari" and Vlore as "Valona". Southern Italian entrepreneurs dominate the Albanian economy: it was announced yesterday that bankers from Aversa, near Naples, were stepping in to prop up Vella Holdings, the main company involved in the failed pyramid savings schemes.

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Nazi gold hunters close in on Sweden's Wallenberg dynasty

HUNTERS of Nazi gold and Sweden's wartime secrets are closing in on the Wallenberg dynasty, the family that holds sway over much of the country's economy.

Their target is the late Jacob Wallenberg, the banker who negotiated Sweden's trading relationship with Nazi Germany; the family is determined that investigators do not project him as an amoral partner of the Hitler regime.

The controversy, which is focusing on who should gain access to the Wallenberg family archives for the wartime years, is particularly poignant because of the hero status of Jacob's cousin, Raoul. It was Raoul Wallenberg who helped to save about 100,000 Hungarian Jews, partly by bribing and bluffing

German officials. After the war he was arrested by the Russians and disappeared in the gulag.

Jacob, uncle of Peter Wallenberg who heads the dynasty now, was an altogether different character. He had active contacts with the German resistance, above all with Carl Goerdeler who was hanged on Hitler's orders, but he was also a frequent and welcome guest of the Berlin regime. Jacob Wallenberg played golf near the Wannsee (where the extermination of the Jews was planned) and ate lobster in the city's best restaurant. His brother, Marcus, paid visits to Hermann Goering, whose first wife was a Swedish countess. While Marcus determined Sweden's trading relationship with the Allies,

Roger Boyes reports from Stockholm on the developing struggle to gain access to the wartime archives of a secretive and powerful family that still controls much of the Swedish economy

Jacob concentrated on the Germans. Swedish ore and ball bearings were sold to the Germans — rocket components for the V2 were stamped "Made in Sweden" — in return for coal, fertilisers and oil.

The balance was made up by payments of gold from the Third Reich. The gold was originally said to be from prewar German reserves, but long after that was shown to be nonsense the gold

Swedes knew what was going on: the gold was plundered from the banks of occupied countries and perhaps had more sinister origins. At the Nuremberg trials, Emil Puhl, deputy head of Hitler's Central Bank, agreed that some gold robbed from Jewish concentration camp victims had been melted into bars and used in trade.

All these facts have emerged over the past few weeks. For Swedes, the shock is equivalent to that felt by the Swiss. The Wallenbergs play a prominent role in the country. Their empire includes the car maker Saab, the ball bearings company SKF and the electrical engineering firm ABB.

Trading with Germany was forced on Sweden because of its

encirclement by Germany. Yet Swedes are wondering whether they did not pay too high a moral price for their passive role.

The Swedish Government is determined not to fall into the same public relations trap as the Swiss. One of the first moves was to set up a working group to study archives, including those of the Wallenbergs. But the family insists that only a government commission should do the job. Now the argument is about who should sit on such a commission.

□ Raoul plea: Guy von Dardel, half-brother of Raoul Wallenberg, has called on the Swedish Government to open its files in an attempt to clarify his fate. Some say he is still alive. (AFP)



Raoul Wallenberg: saved Jews from deportation

Russian bishops begin final steps to canonise last Tsar

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

TALKS began yesterday on making Nicholas II, the last Tsar, a saint in what would be a dramatic reversal of 70 years of Soviet ideology, which branded him a bloody tyrant.

Nearly 80 years after the Tsar was murdered with his family by the Bolsheviks in July 1918, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church has opened deliberations on the issue. The Synod will put its final recommendation before the Assembly of Bishops, which is about to hold its two-yearly convocation. If, as expected, the Synod decides in favour, the Tsar, his wife, Alexandra, and their five children could be saints by the end of the year.

The first steps towards the canonisation of the Russian Royal Family were taken in October when the Synod ordered a nationwide survey of church opinion after a two-year study. The move is certain to highlight the political divisions in a country where a large proportion of the population still hankers after its Communist past.

Tsar Nicholas abdicated in March 1917. After unsuccessful attempts to negotiate sanctuary with his cousin, King George V, the Russian Royal Family was moved to the

Urals, eventually arriving at the city of Yekaterinburg where they were held in the house of a local merchant. On July 17 they were shot and bayoneted to death with three servants and the family doctor.

Supporters of canonisation argue that Russia would have been spared millions of deaths under the Communists if the Tsar's rule had continued and that, as a symbol of Russia, the Tsar's canonisation would be an act of faith for the entire country.

Last month the regional governor in Yekaterinburg ordered the construction of a memorial church to mark the



Tsar Nicholas II: killed with his family in 1918

murder spot. That order, by Eduard Rossel, was in response to long-standing calls from the Orthodox Church for a church on the site of the Ipatyev house, where the Royal Family spent their last weeks. The house was demolished in 1977 on the orders of Boris Yeltsin, then regional Communist chief.

In his memoirs President Yeltsin said he was acting on secret orders from the Politburo in Moscow to bulldoze the building, because of fears that it could become a destination for monarchist pilgrims. He said he had no choice but to carry out "this senseless decision".

The remains of the Royal Family were taken to nearby woods and buried. They lay undiscovered until the late 1980s and only in the last two years have their identities been confirmed through DNA testing. Now a bitter argument is being waged between the authorities in Yekaterinburg and in St Petersburg — where previous Romanovs are buried — over where they should finally be laid to rest. Mr Rossel's move to establish a church on the Ipatyev house site, which is now marked only by a crude wooden framework of a church, would add



Members of the Orthodox Bishops' Synod gather in Moscow yesterday for their meeting, at which the canonisation proposal was due to be examined

strength to his city's claim, although few doubt that St Petersburg will eventually prevail.

Over the past few months Russian interest in the monarchy has soared, while the debate over the possible restitution of a Tsar is frequently aired in the newspapers and on television. The idea has won strong support from the Orthodox Church, which

would regard its own position as greatly strengthened if a Tsar were anointed by the Patriarch.

Mr Yeltsin has played a part in promoting the debate. Last year, soon after his re-election, he spoke of the need for Russia to find a new purpose and ideal, to fill the vacuum left by the discarded and discredited Communist ideology. The only clear idea to emerge from

his proposal was that of restoring the monarchy.

There were even rumours that the President supported the idea and had drafted a secret decree inviting Grand Duke Georgi, considered to be the closest surviving relative of the Tsar, to come to Russia. The Kremlin issued a swift denial that any such secret decree existed.

While interest in the monarchy is clearly growing, it still seems inconceivable that Russia would be able to revert to a system that it rejected vehemently more than 70 years ago. The notion of a constitutional monarch in a country that has tended towards strong, or even authoritarian, leadership would seem very inappropriate.

□ Oil spill: Russian officials acknowledged yesterday that about 1,500 tonnes of oil split out of a burst pipeline in southwestern Russia, but said the Volga river was not affected. The emergency situations ministry said between 300 and 400 tonnes of oil split into a tributary of the Volga, the Meshetka, after the incident, but that dams and "other obstacles" kept the oil from contaminating the Volga. (AFP)

Chinese deny Deng health fear

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING

THE Chinese Government yesterday denied reports that the health of its 92-year-old senior leader, Deng Xiaoping, had worsened. A Foreign Ministry spokesman here dismissed rumours of a massive stroke.

Asian stock markets have been shaken in the past two days by the rumours, despite their recurrence every few months.

There were also reports that other leaders, such as Jiang Zemin, the party chief, and Li Peng, the Prime Minister, had cut short provincial trips to return to Beijing to see Mr Deng, who gave up his last official post after the military suppression of pro-democracy protests in 1989. He has not appeared in public for three years.

Diplomats say the present leadership cannot claim the political authority once held by Mr Deng and appears uncertain of the way ahead. There are fears that his death could lead to instability.

Some envoys speculated that the senior leaders returned, if they did, because of a tense situation stemming from the defection of a North Korean leader, Hwang Jang Yop, now in a South Korean diplomatic compound. Armed Chinese police were holding back North Korean officials who, until Monday, had gathered outside.

However, Kim Jong Il, North Korea's leader, yesterday reinforced an earlier statement by his Government which suggested it might accept Mr Hwang's defection. He said "cowards" who wanted to leave the country should go ahead and do so.

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Dutch veto plan eases way to a two-speed Europe

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN STRASSBOURG

EUROPEAN states would be free to pursue closer integration without fear of veto in such areas as taxation and frontier controls, according to a draft for the revamped Maastricht treaty tabled by the Dutch Government.

The text produced by The Netherlands, the country chairing the treaty discussion, will serve as the basis for negotiation in coming weeks on a formula for a new multi-speed Union that would amount to machinery for states to opt out of deeper integration.

The Dutch version, handed to other governments on Monday, allows for the veto to be preserved in future foreign and defence policy, but it sides with the strong majority of member states that object to Britain's demand for unanimous voting on every area of integration.

The British Government says it will veto any scheme to create machinery for a "flexible" Europe that does not require unanimous consent for every such action. The Labour Party appears to share the Tories' qualms, although most other states argue that the formula would lead to

paralysis. Although it keeps the door open for various voting options, the Dutch draft says states must not stand in the way of the desire of the others to move to "closer co-operation" in internal European Union matters, provided that certain conditions were met.

The main novelty of The Hague's proposal is that two thirds of member states must favour any such step. Once this was acquired, the new group could work for closer integration in such areas as indirect taxation within the states taking part in monetary union, health and safety in the workplace and the environment, according to the Dutch draft.

A big bloc of participating states is needed in these so-called core "Community" affairs to ensure that the EU is not fragmented by competing groups of governments, Dutch officials said.

The "co-operating group" would be able to use all the machinery of the EU, from the Commission to the Court of Justice, but the costs of any new policy would be born only by the participating states. The Dutch text proposes that

in the field of immigration and justice affairs, support from a qualified majority of the member states should be enough to authorise common action.

Refining the machinery for a "flexible" EU will be at the centre of negotiations leading to the Amsterdam summit next June, at which EU leaders are scheduled to finish the Maastricht revamp.

The scheme, which was first floated by the French and the Germans last October, has been embraced by a majority of the EU's 15 states as inevitable, given the need to accommodate a stream of new members from the former Communist bloc and the Mediterranean over the next decade.

Many, however, harbour qualms over its possible use by France and Germany and their close allies to reinforce a powerful "inner core" of EU states inside the future zone of monetary union.

The Government and the Labour Party see flexibility as a solution to Britain's perennial conflicts with its more federalist partners, but they are also wary of the risk of its use as a means to push Britain to the EU's margins.

Commonwealth ministers delay decision on Nigeria sanctions

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE prospect of Commonwealth sanctions against Nigeria receded yesterday, after a ministerial action group called for further evidence from human rights activists before making a decision.

Its failure to recommend immediate sanctions was criticised yesterday by Labour, which said the mission was paving the way for a sell-out. Canada, one of the strongest critics of Nigeria, also voiced anger at the slow pace of change there, but was pleased that human rights campaigners would be able to express their views to the action group. The eight foreign ministers, led by Stan Mudenge of

Zimbabwe, called for more information from civils and non-government organisations at a further meeting in July before giving their advice to the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Edinburgh in October.

Labour has taken a strong line against the military Government of General Sani Abacha, and Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, has made clear Labour's intention to seek tougher curbs, including oil sanctions, should the party come to power.

"It is vital that the Commonwealth sends a strong signal to General Abacha that it will not tolerate the delaying of the

timetable for democracy in Nigeria," Tony Lloyd, the Shadow Foreign Minister, said yesterday. He added that free and fair elections must be held by October next year, and all political prisoners released before Nigeria could be readmitted to the Commonwealth.

After two days of talks in London, the ministers issued a statement expressing "concern" that political detainees, including Chief Moshood Abiola, had not been released and that detention without trial was still taking place in Nigeria. It also noted that local elections had been delayed by three months beyond their scheduled date.



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High street eccentrics

The internationally acclaimed British designers Clements Ribeiro have linked up with Dorothy Perkins. Grace Bradberry reports



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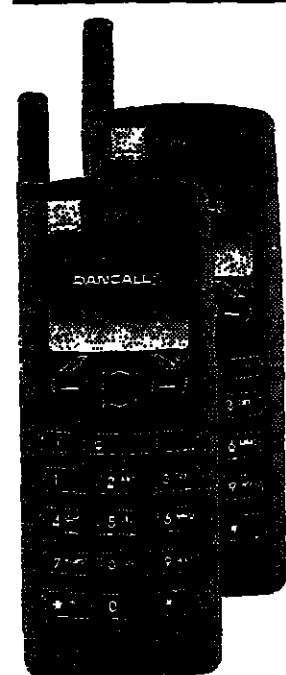


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Yellow chiffon shirt, £50

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Suede jacket and chinos, £95. Yellow chiffon shirt, £50

Going bust used to be what British fashion designers did best. For a while they would blaze like meteors, producing bold but unwearable clothes, before fizzling out amid financial acrimony.

Now a new generation of designers has emerged, and they have not gone bust, nor do they look like doing so. Alexander McQueen's own label is assured now he is chief

designer at Givenchy. Hussein Chalayan and Antonio Berardi are small-scale but solvent. But internationally, it is a husband and wife team called Clements Ribeiro who are making the biggest waves.

Suzanne Clements, 28, (British, from Epsom, Surrey) and Inacio Ribeiro, 35, (from the Brazilian city of Belo Horizonte) met at St Martin's graduating in 1991. They set up their own label in 1993, but it was their 1996 spring collection, featuring cashmere knits in rainbow stripes, that caught the attention of buyers.

Go to New York and you'll find them in most of the major department stores. But in Britain, their clothes are available in only about a dozen stores, notably Liberty, their first stockist.

Nevertheless, their international success, plus a two-season deal with the high-street chain Dorothy Perkins, have allowed them to move from their cramped studio into a three-storey building on South Molton Street.

Three weeks before London Fashion Week, they are festooning the flat roof with Chinese lanterns, so that they

can stand around sipping champagne for the photographer from *Le Monde*, so Clements Ribeiro will appear to be at the epicentre of hip, swinging London.

The reality is that they are going to bed at 3am, and starting again at nine. "British designers have changed," says Suzanne. "Designers who were big in the Eighties partied every night. Nobody does that any more."

It is only recently that Clements Ribeiro have even wanted to be part of "the London thing", as Suzanne refers to it. "When we started we didn't want to be pigeon-holed because London had such a bad reputation for late delivery and things falling apart."

Their style was originally a reaction to what was happening in 1993. "Everyone was deeply into this grunge, deconstructivist thing. We went for fine finishing and couture fabrics. We also worked with colour when everything else was in grey and black."

At first they were out on a limb, but fashion followed them. Suzanne characterises their style as "clumsy cou-

ture", American *Vogue* calls it "bohemian eccentrics".

Having built up such a strong identity, it was a brave move to link up with Dorothy Perkins. Although they knew it would provide a cash injection, they also feared that it would downgrade the label.

The first Clements Ribeiro for Dorothy Perkins collection included striped A-line skirts and embroidered canvas tops. Everything went with everything else.

Above all, the collection transferred their trademark eccentricity and odd colourways to the high street. The spring/summer collection, shown here, is more commercial in one respect, however - the fabrics are more "up-market". "In the first collection we used polyester to be a bit ironic," says Suzanne. "We realised that playing with good taste, bad taste is something fashion people understand but other people don't."

'London had a bad reputation for things falling apart'

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Niles? I'd avoid him

American television sitcom has toppled Hollywood as the place actors want to be seen. Frasier's David Hyde Pierce explains why. Interview by Joe Joseph

SHOWBIZ stardom isn't all Oscar night bashes in Bel Air and getting invited to Porgie's children's birthday parties. There is always a downside.

For David Hyde Pierce — who, for the second year running, has just won an American Comedy Award for his role as Niles, Dr Frasier Crane's snooty brother in the sitcom *Frasier* — the downside is having to spend most of a weekend stay in London inside a hotel room filming promo links for Channel 4.

Having 20 cameramen, make-up girls, sound recordists, directors and publicity people hang on your every whim while you record two-second promos that range from "Watch Channel 4" all the way to "This is Channel 4" is not merely the price of so-so television fame. It is the price of a startling new brand of fame that has become the special preserve of American TV sitcom stars.

It is one thing to wonder how a pompous, churlish Seattle psychiatrist like Niles got to be one of the best-loved comedy characters in America: I mean, weren't we told that American audiences like their TV heroes to be appealing and in control, and that's why our testy, put-upon Victor Meldrew was made more cuddly when *One Foot In The Grave* was unpicked and retooled for Bill Cosby? Pierce, who in addition to his two American Comedy Awards has won an Emmy, a Golden Globe and a Screen Actors Guild Award for the role, hands the credit to a script which has created "selfish and petty in some ways, but also generous and good-hearted in other ways, which is like most human beings."

OK, OK, but how did American TV sitcom topple Hollywood as the place where top actors now ache to be seen? Because while we weren't looking, it has.

Why else are stars such as Julia Roberts, Elliott Gould, Tom Selleck and Danny DeVito — the kind of stars who spent years crawling out of the Mogadon miasma of afternoon TV soap, actors who would until recently have sacked their agent if he had suggested doing a cameo on a television sitcom — all now queuing up to appear on *Friends*, and *Larry Sanders* and *Frasier*? How come the stars of *Seinfeld* are now demanding more cash per episode than many well-known Hollywood stars earn per film? Why is Michael J. Fox now starring in a tele-

vision sitcom rather than in movies? Pierce thinks it could be because "TV has become more legitimate. In *Frasier*, in the radio station, we have all these call-ins. People call in to Frasier for help, and the people they get to do the voices of the call-ins are an amazing array of celebrities. We've had Timothy Leary and Patti Hearst and Henry Mancini, Jodie Foster, the playwright Wendy Wasserstein, a broad spectrum of people."

Yes, but why do they all suddenly want to? "Hopefully, it's a testament to the quality of the show, that people are not embarrassed to be associated with it. But also I think that as more and more TV people have become movie stars — people such as Tom Hanks, Bruce Willis — that it's starting to be an easier move back and forth between the media."

Pierce never planned to be on TV at all. An East Coast boy, Yale-educated, he had turned his back on a musical career ("I found out that I didn't have the interest to work the hours, and nor did I have the talent to pursue any sort of concert career"). He was happy doing repertory theatre, places where his name was in lights in 20-watt bulbs, if at all. A TV star? Just never crossed his mind.

"Not even. I thought I would be going nowhere near television. I just had no interest in it. It's much more separated over there than it is over here. People don't tend to go as frequently back and forth from one to the other. I was very happy. I was in New York doing theatre and I loved it. Even now I still prefer doing stuff in front of a live audience, which is what we have on the show."

The episodes are written and directed and performed for the audience that is there, like a stage play. Some of the best laughs that you can get are the ones when you just stand there, because they've given you a wonderful line to deliver. And you just let the laughs wash over you. That's a great pleasure."

He describes Niles as "intelligent, well-dressed and badly married... Niles's wife, Maris, is cold yet distant, but Niles loves her... probably because she reminds him of his mother. His relationship with Frasier is a mix of sibling rivalry, condescension, passive aggression and brotherly love."

So do Pierce and Niles have anything in common?

"Oh, probably more than I care to admit."

Pierce is certainly more relaxed than Niles, and al-

I'd love to be a film star, but I don't see that really happening



"I'd say I'm seen as Niles, the character on the show, and that's very scary," says Pierce

though his diction is precise, it doesn't have that clenched-buttock angst that Niles has mastered.

What about any natural affinity?

"No. I think he's someone who, if I had the choice, I would spend as little time with as possible."

But Pierce adores the role and adores his fellow cast members. He rates Kelsey Grammer — Frasier Crane — as "the best. Not only because he's so talented, but also he is the most generous actor. None of us would have the success in the show that we have if he didn't allow us to."

There are plenty of stars who don't want anyone else to shine. He's the opposite of that. He feels, like, he looks better, the better the people are around him. And we love working together."

But where does Pierce go from here? *Frasier* could be on air for another three years or so. Maybe longer. He has done low-key, walk-on parts in

movies — *The Fisher King*, *Crossing Delancey*, *Sleepless in Seattle*. Wolf, he played John Dean in Oliver Stone's *Nixon* — and he is aware that he is being slightly strait-jacketed by Niles Crane.

"It's a little scary. And I wouldn't even say I'm seen as an American comedy star. I'd say I'm seen as Niles, the character on the show, and that's very scary." Which is why he is fishing around for a film role that will snap his fans out of their prejudices and preconceptions.

Predictably for an industry fared for its skill at thinking creatively, so many of the film scripts that pop through Pierce's letterbox in Los Angeles "are so similar to Niles that I turn them down out of hand. The rest? So far I still haven't found anything I want to do film-wise."

Theatre still owns his heart — Pierce's first stop in London was Wyndham's, to see Albert

Finney and Tom Courtenay in *Art* — "but in trying to combat the whole people-seeing-you-as-a-certain-character problem, just the mass exposure of a film makes it seem more the right thing to do at this point."

So maybe something directed by Tarantino? Tell us David, do you see yourself in a sharp black suit, looking mean and pumping bullets into people?

"Yeah, but that's just in my private life. I'd love to be a film star, but I don't see that really happening, except on a very small scale. I keep turning down all those Sylvester Stallone roles."

Meanwhile, he is called away again to pucker his lips for the camera in the now over-hot Savoy bedroom and to swoon: "I love Channel 4." The long march to stardom is made up of thousands of such small, unglamorous steps. Only nowadays, it's the sort of TV work that Julia Roberts and Jodie Foster might well kill for.

Who wins in the adoption debate?

TWO questions are being asked this week: both are concerned with the same issue: who is a fit parent and who is a fit child? I suspect many of the people who argue against abortion are those, too, who applaud the Government's recent initiative to remove, in the words of Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, "fashionable theories" from the adoption procedure.

Both views are tenable independently; neither necessarily supports the other. I would go further: those who are opposed to abortion are concerned with the rights and welfare of the prospective child; and yet the voices raised against what are perceived to be the current rules dominating adoption are motivated overwhelmingly by the desires of the putative parents.

I don't disparage or question those desires: the psychological and emotional need for children is not to be underplayed. But rather than applauding the Government's sensitivity towards those who have the need but not the ability to bear children of their own, I am appalled by its cruel cynicism.

I don't argue with its central premise: as the *Times* leader pronounced yesterday, "adoption is no place for political correctness". But for Mr Dorrell to suggest that childless couples are being prevented from adopting just because their views and social situation are not considered right-on enough by bearded and sandalled social workers is just phooey. The reason so many people who want to adopt can't is because there aren't enough children.

Well, that's not entirely the case: there aren't enough babies. Those who have gone beyond the stage of being cuddlesome bundles can be left to languish in institutions for years. There's no market for them. I am not being unsympathetic: I can see why a childless couple would prefer to adopt a newborn rather than an angry, institutionalised five-year-old.

A woman's overpowering physical need to hold a baby, her baby, in her arms is an essential driving force in life. But it is important when people write or speak about childless couples being rejected as appropriate parents that they should consider another truth. Many would-be adoptive parents are, in effect, rejecting those they consider to be inappropriate children.

I'm not saying there aren't idiocies committed by social workers or local authorities. I remember a case not so long ago when a Chinese baby, who had been left in one of those horrific "dying rooms" because she was a girl, was not allowed to be adopted by an English couple because it was felt she would not then learn about the "richness of her own culture".

Why should it be considered wrong to be concerned with matters of race, of blood? Sir Stephen Brown was quite right to accuse Alan

and Deborah Fowler of "appalling irresponsibility" in pretending they didn't know the grandfather of the orphaned Bosnian girl they had adopted was trying to locate her in order to bring her up himself. I think he was right, too, not to inflict enormous emotional upheaval on the child by forcing the Fowlers to send her back to her grandfather, but I hate to think how she might react to the story of her early life in later years.

It is chauvinism of the worst kind to think that just because a baby is "foreign" it doesn't deserve the same consideration as British babies up for adoption. And as for matters of race: we may sneer at the idea of a white couple being refused a black baby for adoption (and I agree the refusal shouldn't be automatic), but one can scarcely imagine the outrage that would follow a white baby being adopted by a black couple. Racism is a factor here, and we should investigate it both ways around, not pretend it is all a PC plot.

Perhaps it is the case that social workers sometimes give PC reasons for turning down prospective adoptive parents because they erroneously feel that citing race or age may sound more acceptable, more intellectually sound, when the real reasons are based on that vague but crucial thing called instinct, and those very "commonsense values" that Mr Dorrell commends.

As was reported in yesterday's paper, when Jim and Roma Lawrence were rejected as inappropriate people to adopt a child, much was made of the reason given — that they were not sensitive enough to issues of race — and yet it now transpires that really it was because they were considered too blinkered in their approach, too intransigent — in other words, not sensitive enough to the needs of a child.

Of course there are many natural parents who are insensitive to the needs of their children. Parents maltreat, beat and even kill their children. Michael Jackson paid a woman to bear his child and took it away from her a week after birth. It all makes my blood run cold. How much worse must it seem to someone who desperately wants but can't have children. But it is important to remember that the injustice, the cruelty, is nature's, not the social worker's.

Short of picking up and running with an old suggestion, made a few party conferences ago, which was that feckless single mothers could be made to give up their babies to nice middle-class people with nice Laura Ashleyed nurseries, one fact remains. The Government's tinkering with adoption procedure — good though it sounds to a disenchanted middle class on the eve of an election — isn't going to increase the number of babies up for adoption, so obviously it can do nothing to decrease the number of disappointed adoptive parents. To suggest otherwise is emotionally exploitative electioneering at its worst.



Nigella Lawson

Quentin Crisp and the gay question

AS FOR who is fit to be a child: just after James Watson, the discoverer of DNA, expresses the view that if a woman could find out that the foetus she was carrying were gay she should be able to abort it, out comes Quentin Crisp in favour. Often, he said, in support of Watson's

suggestion, he wished he had not been born.

For some reason his unhappiness is seen as corroboration that homosexuals are better off not existing in the first place. He's gay, he says it's all right, so it's OK for us to do so, too, is the implication. In another context, the

"self-hating Jew" is a well-known phenomenon: but that hardly justifies Auschwitz. Anyone but a committed anti-Semite might think that morbid self-deprecation might itself emanate from such lethal hostility, rather than the other way around.

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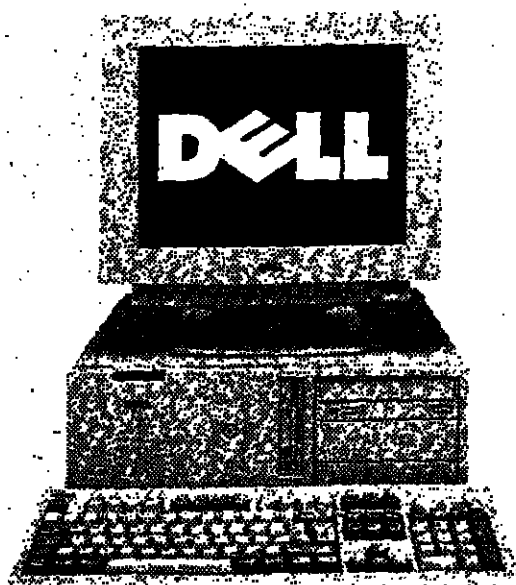
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Caught between two courts

Michael Zander supports moves to restrict trial by jury

A proposal to restrict the right to jury trial in civil cases has attracted fierce controversy. In 1993, furious opposition met a recommendation by the Runciman Royal Commission on Criminal Justice. We on the commission argued that in cases which can be tried either by magistrates or in the Crown Court by a jury (either-way offences), the defendant should lose the absolute right to have a jury.

The severe criticism of the proposal seemed to rule out its implementation. Particularly significant was the strong opposition of Lord Taylor of Gossforth, then the Lord Chief Justice.

So it is rather surprising that the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, has now decided that if returned to office he would introduce legislation to implement the recommendation. On this, in contrast to some of his previous proposals, I would support him.

The proposal does not affect trial by jury itself. The principle at stake is who should decide where the case is tried — defendant or court? For minor offences, trial has to be in the magistrates' court; for the most serious it has to be in the Crown Court.

There is no choice. But in the intermediate category, which includes theft cases, the defendant has had the right to insist on the Crown Court.

About 80 per cent of defendants in these cases opt for trial by magistrates. Of the rest, about two-thirds are sent for trial in the Crown Court by the magistrates and the other third elect for trial in the Crown Court. It is this last group (about 23,000 annually), who would be affected by the proposal.

The defendant's right to choose goes back not, as is sometimes said, to Magna Carta, but to the mid 19th century, when Parliament decided that some offences could be tried either in the magistrates' court or in the much slower and more costly higher court with a jury.

In Scotland, this decision is taken by the prosecution. The royal commission proposed that if prosecution and defence cannot agree on the matter, the decision should be made by the magistrates in the light of statutory guidelines.

The royal commission's motive was neither to save money nor to speed up cases (though it probably would do both). We thought that these decisions should be made by the system. It is as wrong to leave to the defendant the choice of court as it would be to leave to him the choice of judge.

Defendants often choose jury trial because the acquittal rate of juries is higher than that of magistrates. In the royal commission's view, however, this is no more a valid reason for preserving the right than would be a defendant's wish to choose the Crown Court as a delaying tactic.

The point of principle is buttressed by powerful practical considerations. One is that as many as three-quarters of

those who ask for trial by jury for either-way offences do not ever see a jury, because they decide at the last moment to plead guilty. Defendants and their lawyers should of course take their decisions in what seems to be the defendant's best interests. But large numbers of last-minute guilty pleas (known as "cracked trials") do create problems. They add, for instance, to prison overcrowding. Defendants who wait for Crown Court trial in prison and are then given a non-custodial penalty after pleading guilty have been in custody much longer than if they had been dealt with in a magistrates' court. And the very fact of a case being listed as a not guilty plea has the effect of increasing delays for all Crown Court cases.

Preparing for a contested trial that does not take place means wasting time and money. The waste of money mainly concerns the taxpayer. The waste of time affects not only lawyers but police officers, doctors and other experts, as well as ordinary citizens who come to court to be witnesses, only to find there is no trial.

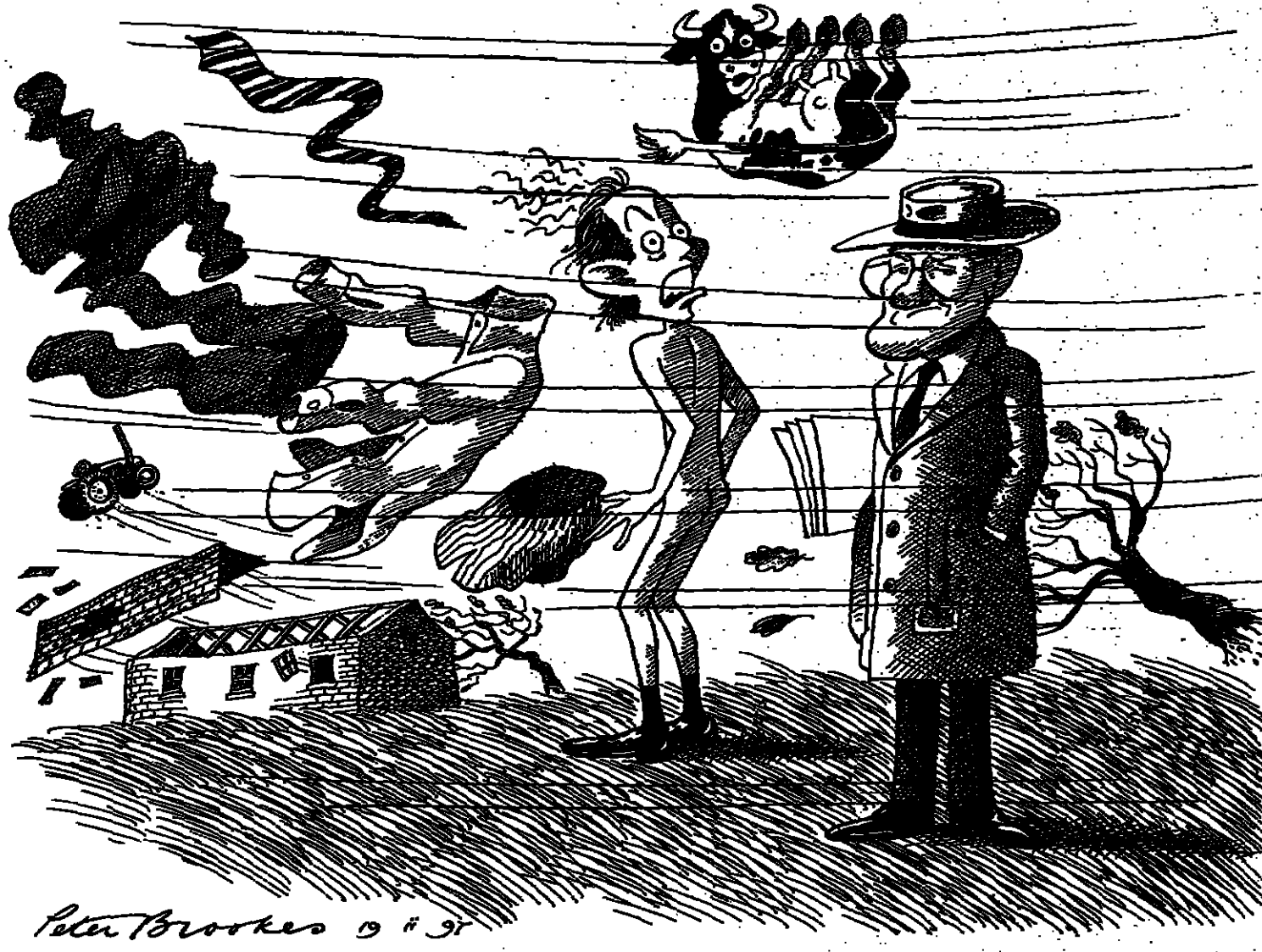
Defendants suffer too. Those charged with either-way offences are three times more likely to receive a custodial sentence in the Crown Court than in a magistrates' court. Likewise, custodial sentences from the Crown Court are about two-and-a-half times as long as those in similar cases dealt with by magistrates.

Of course it will still be vital that the defendant whose case deserves trial by jury goes to the Crown Court. In such a case the prosecution would usually agree, but if the prosecutor were to be difficult, the magistrates would take the decision, guided by considerations mentioned in the proposed legislation.

One consideration, the royal commission suggested, should be the defendant's reputation, since jury trial is especially appropriate for cases involving potential loss of good reputation. Lord Taylor has suggested that this is unfair to the person with a criminal record. But is it? Other things being equal, a defendant with a prior record has less good reputation to lose than a defendant with none. That does not mean he should automatically be denied trial by jury for an either-way offence. It simply means that the magistrates should take his criminal record into account, together with all other relevant considerations, such as the date of the previous conviction, the gravity of the current accusation and its likely impact on his reputation if convicted.

Any proposed change in the rights of the accused always requires the most anxious consideration. I believe that in this case, what the Government proposes is sensible and fair.

Michael Zander, Professor of Law at the London School of Economics, was a member of Lord Runciman's Royal Commission.



The new escalation

America's pet plan to expand Nato means taking unnecessary risks

The following statements cannot both be true. "Nato enlargement is a goal worth every measure of our common effort..." The new Nato can vanquish old hatreds, promote integration, create a secure environment for prosperity and deter violence in the region where two world wars and the cold war began." The speaker is Madeleine Albright, American Secretary of State. She is supported by the British Government.

The second statement reads: "Nato enlargement would be the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold-War era..." It will inflame nationalist, anti-Western and militaristic tendencies in Russian opinion, have an adverse side-effect on the development of Russian democracy and restore the atmosphere of Cold War to East-West relations." This speaker is George Kennan, veteran diplomat and Kremlinologist. He is supported by many letters to *The Times*.

These people should sort out their difference, and soon. One of them is wrong, and if it is Madeleine Albright we are in trouble. In July, the Nato council proposes to admit at least three new members, probably Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Other applicants include the Baltic states, Romania, Slovenia and Bulgaria. Moscow is furious at any shift eastwards of the limit of Nato's Article 5 guarantee. This pledges that an attack on any member state is an attack on all — most important, on America. Enlargement will expand that guaranteed nuclear umbrella hundreds of miles closer to Moscow.

Some say, the Cold War is over so why should Russia worry. But to Russia, if the Cold War is over, why is Nato worrying? Nato enlargement is the West's equivalent of Russian missiles in Cuba. The proposal has enraged Russia's liberals and reactionaries alike. Anatoly Chubais, the sensible Kremlin Chief of Staff, agrees with Mr Kennan that it is "one of the worst ideas advanced by the West" since the Cold War. To Mikhail Gorbachev it is "hawkish, conservative and aggressive". To President Yeltsin it is a disaster he could well do without. To his possible replacement, Alexander Lebed, it is a cloud that may have a silver lining. Western envoys and generals have warned against so gratuitously rubbing Moscow's nose in the dirt of Cold War defeat.

Madeleine Albright purrs that

Russia is overreacting. Nato enlargement will reward the new European democracies with membership of a looser family than the EU, which will not at present accept them. Nato offers American-sponsored security. "Freedom's boundaries", she says, quoting her boss, "should be defined by new behaviour not old history."

For her, Russia fear enlargement, she says. Nato will not station nuclear or even conventional forces on Polish, Czech or Hungarian soil. Mr Clinton has offered Russia a Partnership for Peace. Russia can join in Nato planning, Nato training, Nato

consultation, Nato out-of-area operations, as in Bosnia. She puts the Russian bear on the head as its sweat through another turbulent night, and reassuringly says she means no harm.

Like hell. There is a side-effect to Madeleine Albright's placebo. Those who disagree with her, she says, are stuck in the past, "at the line where the Red Army halted in spring 1945". She recalls a different past, the past of appeasement. She is Czech by origin, and remembers not 1945 but 1938. Liberals have always looked at menacing regimes and pleaded that domestic liberalism has given a chance. She will have no appeasement.

For her, Russia cannot be allowed to dictate the terms of any new European settlement. If Russia is a mess, Russia is always a mess. If Russia is afraid of military revanchism, that is Russia's problem. If Russia is scared of encirclement, too bad. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic are scared of Russia, and with better reason. The more unstable Russia is, the more worried they are entitled to be. It is their fears that enlargement must address. That is what Washington's Polish, Czech and Hungarian lobbies are demanding. Mr Clinton saw no reason to refuse them in his election campaign. They had votes.

This is at least Realpolitik. The central European states do not want Nato membership for the sake of a flag on the conference table. Nato is

not a Rotary Club. It is a security alliance. Enlargement says clearly that Russia is still dangerous, unstable and not to be trusted. Russia has just lost a war and merits no consideration. To Madeleine Albright, appeasement has a nice harmony, but a terrible coda. Europe cannot be permitted to make that mistake again.

The question is which mistake? Ask Britain's politicians or diplomats about Nato enlargement and they give a despairing shrug. It is like global warming or drug cartels or even EU enlargement. It keeps the foreign and defence ministers taking the line of least resistance, without looking where that line leads. The sole purpose of altering Europe's security balance should be to increase Europe's security. The enlargement of Nato appears to offer three (and possibly five) nations a near meaningless guarantee, in such a way as seriously to endanger their security from the East. It encourages them to be less cautious in relations with Russia, and encourages Russia to be more paranoid in its relations with them.

Madeleine Albright, pleads with Europe's sceptics to stop looking at enlargement as a "zero-sum game". But she offers a minus-sum game. Britain, needless to say, has known it.

These are huge stakes. Those who believe Madeleine Albright is right assume that Russia is bluffing. Moscow will get used to an enlarged Nato. Generals and bureaucrats on both sides will spend time and money assuring each other that nothing has changed. They will say that enlarging Nato is about sustaining America's commitment to all of Europe, Central and Eastern as well as Western. The Partnership for Peace charter will keep Russia happy.

But if Madeleine Albright is wrong and Mr Kennan is right, Mr Clinton's mistake, and Britain's, is awesome. Russian democracy is sorely vulnerable to a military or right-wing coup. Russia's elite has always feared encirclement. Independence for the Balts, Belorussians and Ukrainians may prove shortlived if Moscow gets too nervous. Already there is pressure to divert Russian resources into rebuilding its army and weapons base. Russian generals, reacting to enlargement, last month demanded that Mr Yeltsin re-target their missiles at Nato capitals. Who began all this? Nato, fidgeting.

Needless to say, this will not feature in the British general election. Not since 1964 has a party (the Conservatives) decided to fight a contest primarily on foreign policy. There are no votes in collective security. When Britain's possible next prime minister, Tony Blair, was recently asked about Nato enlargement, he smiled and assumed it was "a good thing". It was clear he had not really thought about the matter.

If Mr Kennan is right, Mr Blair might soon be thinking about nothing else. Mr Kennan is 92 and has seen Russia in all its moods. Sometimes old men know best.

Simon Jenkins

Stand up for British culture

Philip Delves Broughton offers counselling

The British Council, like the United Nations, is an organisation in which small heroic acts are perpetually overshadowed by large crass ones. For every African teenager who learns English from a khaki-trunked British Council teacher, there is a fuss over expensive office space and overpaid administrators.

Just when the Foreign Office examines its contribution to the British Council budget, up popped the story of the council's generosity in 1976, when it gave £1,000 to a man calling himself Genesis P. Orridge. He took an exhibition round America of pictures of bloodstained women's clothing and his common law wife Casey Fanny Tutti in collar-loosening poses.

Now the council has landed itself in another Orridge mess — for the chattering rather than slaving classes this time — with the proposal to close down lending libraries across Western Europe and South-East Asia and replace them with computerised "information centres".

The closure of the lending library in Athens with its Byron and Broke associations is the focus for those opposing the decision. A worthy, but awfully familiar Greek chorus of concerned parties has spoken, from John Mortimer (the Thesias of literary institutions) to Fay Weldon (the Cassandra), Patrick Leigh-Fermor, the travel writer and deputy director of the British Council in Athens after the Second World War, has been roused from his Peloponnesian home to denounce a "creeping philistinism manifesting itself all over the place".

An organisation of Concerned English Speakers of Athens, who sound like the sorts endlessly snapping the handles off bone china teacups in frustration at the reptile Modernism, is agitating for a Common-wealth Library to house the British Council's 11,000 books. It seems inevitable, however, that this week, the largest collection of English books in Greece will be handed to the Greek Government — an act which even a group of Greek academics has said would have "a deplorable effect on the prospects for Greek students studying in England".

The council puts forward all kinds of explanations for its proposal, most of them riddled with management-speak. It says that its main task is to target resources towards influencing decision-makers and promoting British trade, culture and education. Dull old lending libraries, it argues, are no longer central to this.

In Europe and boom economies such as Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia, there is, it says, a constant need for information about Britain, with government reports and legal decisions required instantly. No time or money is left for curious English language students to browse through *The Thirty-Nine Steps* or *King Lear*.

In truth, the British Council and the Foreign Office are engaged in a cheap, undignified cultural withdrawal. The Foreign Office, which funds just under a third of the British Council's £430 million annual budget, will be reducing its contribution by £7 million over the next three years. Each major lending library costs around £200,000 a year. All the talk of moving with the times is a cover for cost-cutting.

What is worse, the British Council has fallen for the futurists' fallacy. It believes that by computerising and becoming a better servant of business, it is making itself more "relevant". But anyone can provide computerised information and a stack of CD-ROMs. With a commercial incentive, hundreds of companies could make the efforts of the British Council look prehistoric. Yet none would replace the lending libraries, with their value that can never be represented on a balance sheet. With its lust for relevance, the British Council could well end up redundant.

In Germany, the only section of the lending library that has been kept open is contemporary British fiction. The same is true in Hong Kong, where the rest of the library has been given to the British Council in Hanói. It is a weedy capitulation at a time when it is the duty of any representative of British culture that can dig in to do so.

In 1989, the British Council gave £70,000 to fund a tour of the Middle East by a rock band from Newcastle with the odd Edwardian name. Hurrah! The aim was to make Britain appealing to Middle Eastern youth via pop music. The audience came in immaculate dress to the concerts and looked on in bemusement at the scruffy musicians. It was not what they wanted or expected from the British Council. Furthermore, in an era when record companies promote Western artists all over the world, it was a superfluous gesture. The British Council was trying to be Brian Epstein, and it failed. Now it is trying to be Microsoft and Reuters, rather than a guardian and promoter of the best of British culture.

At its best, the British Council is Britain's finest cultural ambassador, yet it now seems resigned to being a keyboard-happy embarrassment. By slashing away at its lending libraries, it is serving neither its nation nor the culture that it is bound by Royal Charter to promote.

Late calls

AS JOHN MAJOR eases himself into the last straight before the election, his ministers are keeping him hidden from the Conservative parliamentary candidates clamouring for attention.

Tory candidates and MPs are anxious to have their photographs taken with the Prime Minister so as to include them in their electioneering brochures. But Conservative Central Office, under the watchful eye of the British chairman, Brian Mawhinney, is refusing to countenance the idea.

There are no more slots. It can't be done," runs the stock response from the Central Office wallahs who organise photo-shoots. Those who have missed their pre-election snapshot are dismayed: "I know he is supposed to be our secret weapon. But is he such a secret he has to be kept from public view?" protested one former minister yesterday.

Most of the disappointed MPs have opted for a photograph instead of their performances in the Commons chamber during Prime Minister's Question Time. "It makes us look rather important," added the former minister.

"There have been numerous

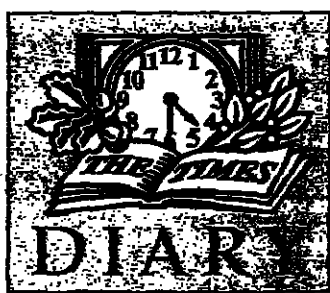
photo-opportunities in the past," says Central Office. They should not have left it so late.

Drum role

THE PIPES AND DRUMS of Britain's only private army will soon be drowning out the wildebeest of the African veld. The Atholl Highlanders, guardsmen of the Duke of Atholl's home, Blair Castle, are hoiking up their kilts and heading off in May to march for the new duke at his home in the Northern Province, formerly Northern Transvaal.

It will be the first time that the Highlanders, who have never seen action, have blown African dust through their bagpipes. "John Murray, the late duke's successor, is South African, and he now has the right to the private army," says Captain Andrew Gordon, their adjutant. "We're only visiting, though. We'll not be away from Blair Castle for long."

● The excitement of performing live appears to be irresistible to Noel Gallagher, the Oasis songwriter. Only last year, after an



abortive tour of America, Noel and his group declared they would never play live again. But on Monday he turned up, heavily disguised in a floppy hat, to play backing guitar for another Manchester band, Ocean Colour Scene, at the Albert Hall. "He slunk on, played a few riffs, and slunk off again," says a fan.

Double dished

MIDDLESBOROUGH Football Club's temperamental Brazilian player — known simply as Emerson — has a history of absconding to Rio to appease his homesick wife and escape the grim British winter. Now he faces another, equally British, problem. Carping neighbours. They reported him to the council for installing a large satellite

dish so that his wife, who has suffered from depression, could watch both Portuguese television and Sky. They pointed out that the dish's diameter exceeded the permissible 90cm. So he bought two smaller dishes.

The neighbours quickly informed him of local regulations stipulating just one dish per household, and Emerson is now rueing yet further his arrival in Little England.

Hall of fuss

SANITY has disappeared from Exeter, where a bizarre fight has



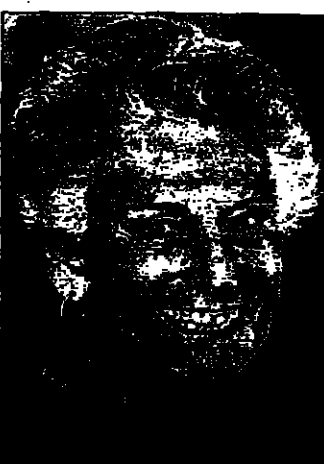
broken out between Bernie Grant, the exorbitant Labour MP for Tottenham, and Dr Adrian Rogers, the uppity local Tory candidate. Grant has written to Exeter's Royal Albert Memorial Museum asking for a list of its collection of Nigerian artefacts, from ceremonial head-dresses to swords and fancy shields.

Most of the stuff was either bought or given rather than pilaged. Nonetheless, Grant wants the lot returned to Africa. The local Labour candidate disagrees, and Rogers, who claims to speak up for family values, has taken advantage of the issue to call Nigeria "a corrupt country, riddled with socialism and AIDS".

Front page

THREE-QUARTERS of a century after its composition, Sir William Walton's Toccata for Violin and Piano is to have its first full performance next month. Composed in 1922, it languished in Walton's drawer at his home in Italy until his death in 1983, when his widow, Susana, sent it to his publisher, Oxford University Press. Somehow, the first page of the score then went missing.

On the only recording of the work, made a couple of years ago, the beginning of the work is still

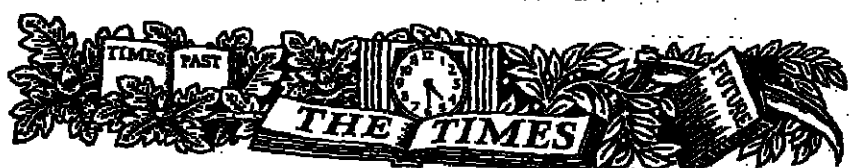


Lady Walton: expectation

missing. Paul Barritt, the violinist who will be performing it at the Oldham Festival, badgered OUP for a full score.

On January 9, the press sent him a letter saying the first page had been lost for good. The very next day, however, it sent another letter saying the page had been found. Lady Walton, an Argentinian, will be in Oldham, Walton's home town, for the performance. According to Barritt, "she is thrilled".

P-H-S



STARR IN HIS EYES

Starr may head for the beach: Clinton cannot

On Monday, Americans celebrated Presidents Day. By late evening, Bill Clinton may have thought it was his birthday rather than those of Washington and Lincoln. Kenneth Starr, the Whitewater independent counsel who has stalked the First Couple for three years, announced that he would shortly resign. The special prosecutor has accepted the enticing post of dean of the law school at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. He will take up his duties in August.

Although he stressed that his investigation was "active and ongoing", and that observers should "read nothing into this", the implications of Mr Starr's decision seem clear. It is difficult to believe that a man of his authority would abandon his position at this point if he intended to press charges against either the President or the First Lady. While other aspects of his remit, notably the misuse of FBI files by White House officials early in the Clinton tenure, may yet prove politically embarrassing, criminal charges concerning Whitewater itself seem unlikely.

Nothing was said, but the relief surrounding the Administration was evident. Unnamed officials suggested that the shadow of scandal which has long fallen over the Clintons might finally have lifted. Such optimism is misplaced. For as one set of ethical questions shows signs of disappearing, another looms on the horizon. Although the location and circumstances are different, the deluge of details emerging about the Democratic Party's fundraising practices since 1995 have much in common with the Arkansas land deals. They both reflect on the company that Mr Clinton has chosen to keep.

The revelations about the lengths to which he was prepared to go to win campaign contributions get more outrageous by the week. In October it transpired that Indonesian businessmen had contributed large sums of money to the Democratic National Committee (DNC) using American residents as

conduits. That was transparently against the spirit of the law, but arguably not the letter. After that, it became clear that John Huang, then deputy assistant Commerce Secretary, used his "free time" during official visits in Asia to chase donations for the DNC.

However, such dubious activities extended much further. Under Mr Clinton, wealthy benefactors were offered unusual access to top office-holders, including those responsible for regulating their corporate affairs. Even overnight accommodation at the White House was available. The President found time to host coffee mornings for those who might release riches in his party's direction. One of his guests was an arms merchant for the People's Republic of China. The trail now leads towards Mexico's drug barons. Mr Clinton has certainly lived up to his promise to be a free trade President.

These sordid transactions have a strong echo of Nixon-era misdoings. The Administration then was accused of swapping political favours for private funds. Even if no such bargain occurred at any gathering attended by the President, the impression of potential impropriety is extremely powerful. Unlike the Whitewater events, which played themselves out in Little Rock some years before Mr Clinton became a presidential contender, these fresh scandals happened in the American capital, only months ago.

So far, Janet Reno, the US Attorney-General, has resisted calls to appoint a new independent counsel to investigate the whole affair. The signs are, though, that her opinion may be changing. Such a move may occur within weeks. It is difficult to see how she can avoid it. The possibility that American policy at home and abroad might have been for hire is infinitely more important than property speculation in northwest Arkansas. Mr Clinton should enjoy his respite. Mr Starr may be headed for the beach, but Mr Clinton may soon be inviting the attentions of another special prosecutor.

ONE NATION

Asian entrepreneurs should move from home to House

The real Asian tigers are on our doorsteps. The spirit of enterprise that has transformed the nations of the Pacific Rim is now taking over the British high street. A list of Britain's 100 richest Asians in the journal *Eastern Eye* reveals the extent to which ethnic diversity has underpinned economic growth. The creation of a multicultural society has not, however, been painless.

The difficulties were poignantly underlined yesterday by the presence of the tragic yet dignified figure of Stephen Lawrence's mother at the London launch of the European Year Against Racism. The debate provoked by the failure to bring his murderer to justice has forced an agonised examination of how society deals with racial tensions — but the creation of One Nation depends just as much on celebrating achievement as acknowledging difficulties. The recognition of how much Britain now owes to its new entrepreneurs can play a part in building tolerance and guaranteeing esteem for all minorities.

The list might have been designed to confound prejudice. Although many of the millionaires have roots in those sectors of the economy where the Asian presence is traditionally strong, such as fashion and retail, the impression overall is of diversity. Internet advertising tycoons, metal exchange dealers and independent television entrepreneurs all jostle for prominence in the ranks of those who might now be considered, with a nod to Hyderabad rather than Hollywood, the new moguls.

It is noticeable that many of the businesses listed are family affairs. Although generalisation can be an easy refuge for the casual racist it would be perverse not to acknowledge

the closeness of most Asian families in Britain. The combination of tradition, faith and communal identity has meant that Asian families have shown greater resilience and solidarity than their neighbours. The cultivation of older domestic virtues has helped newer entrepreneurial instincts to take root.

A commitment to the hearth has not, however, held Asian women back. Two of the most impressive buccaners in the list are female. Meena Pathak and Pervin Warsir may have started in the kitchen but they now hold their own in boardrooms. Family firms may grow out of a simple concern, like the Pathaks' spice business, but many of the older Asian concerns have responded to changing economic circumstances by diversifying. Indeed, the aristocrats of the Asian business community like the Hinduja dynasty can no more be pigeon-holed in one sector of the economy than could Lord Hanson or Sir James Goldsmith. Yet, even as they grow, the nature of the Hinduja's business remains firmly family.

The Prime Minister has gone out of his way to draw attention to the contribution of ethnic minorities to Britain's revival. Mr Major's own loathing of prejudice is not in doubt, but it is a matter for regret that no party in Parliament has succeeded in finding more than a handful of candidates from racial minorities for winnable seats. Tokenism, quotas and the promotion of the mediocre would all be counter-productive. But given the wealth of Asian talent creating wealth for Britain there seems to be no shortage of potential parliamentarians. The more visible a role the nation's ethnic minorities play in shaping the future, the better for Britain.

TEST OF CHARACTER

Those who enjoy their cricket win: and vice versa

One Test victory does not make a winter triumph. But it certainly throws a ray of sunshine onto the cricket pitch of the mind, and revises hasty verdicts in the greatest game of skill and chance. If England had come straight home after losing all three one-day internationals on the Zimbabwe leg of this tour, they would have been met with rotten tomatoes at Heathrow and humiliating headlines. Atherton would have been lucky to have kept his job as captain.

Now, according to the scorebook, England were foiled of a clean sweep in this winter's five Tests only by rain, a single run and a last-wicket stand by the worst international batsman in the world. Such is the charm of cricket. So yesterday's dawn victory in England kept radios on all night for its swings and roundabouts. Only once before had an England team scored more than 300 to win a Test. Atherton added 118 to his 94 not out, when he became only the seventh England player to carry his bat. Without him, England would have lost. So, after a miserable start, the captain has confirmed his form as a world-class opening bat, and played his way into the cricket books beside such other England openers as Hutton and Hobbs. When such players open the innings, confidence runs through the pavilion and foreboding through the fielders.

Television has increased the pressure on all sportsmen for instant success. For they are now highly paid entertainers, and expected to win for their paymasters.

Atherton does not rate the one-day games as serious cricket. But many of his public do. So England can now crown their winter campaign by winning them, if possible with style. Their dressing-room siege mentality and whinging publicity have not done much for the generous spirit of the game. It is a noble cliché. But it is also true: England cricketers are ambassadors, and should be seen to enjoy themselves and the countries they are lucky enough to be selected to tour.

And England's first win of an overseas series since 1992 has not raised them overnight to the top of the world rankings. Just as their relative failure in Zimbabwe did not make them bottom of the league. But their first six batsmen are beginning to look like making runs rather than rous. Atherton has become one of the most formidable openers, especially in a pinch. Tufnell and Croft have spun for victory. England's strike bowlers are on and off and wide. And from the opposition, Zimbabwe have made their mark as a world power, and Daniel Vettori has made his mark as a schoolboy prodigy with a twirl that is going to cause trouble.

So in spite of its bad temper and bad luck, this has been a good tour, so far. After the rain comes the sunshine. After the duck or the umpire's bad decision comes the perfect late cut or the unplayable reverse swing. Uncertainty is the element in which cricket, like life, glories. At this rate England will start to believe they can thrash Australia this summer. And once they believe that, they can.

Public opinion on criminal justice

From Baroness Blatch, Minister of State, Home Office

Sir, William Rees-Mogg ("The Lords aren't soft on crime, just sensible", February 17) is wrong to imply that under the Crime (Sentences) Bill petty thieves will automatically receive a three-year prison sentence for a third conviction. They will not.

The Bill targets persistent house burglars — career criminals who make money out of breaking into other people's homes. The "petty thief" who steals milk bottles from someone's doorstep — which after all is where most milk bottles are left by the milkman — will not be subject to automatic minimum sentences.

It is essential that the public have confidence in our criminal justice system. If people believe that justice will not be done then that is the route to vigilantism and mob rule. A sample from the Crown Courts in 1993 and 1994 showed that the average sentence for a first conviction of domestic burglary was 16.2 months — and the burglary serves only half of that. For a third conviction it was 18.9 months and for a seventh or more it was 19.4 months. In fact almost 30 per cent of those convicted of domestic burglary for a seventh time were not sent to prison at all.

I do not believe — nor do the police and most members of the public, including the man on the top of the bus referred to so disparagingly by William Rees-Mogg — that this is a sufficient punishment. The Bill will ensure that anyone convicted of a third offence of burglary (not petty theft) receives a sentence of no less than three years in prison.

William Rees-Mogg may believe it is wrong to listen to what the public have to say about law and order. I do not. Government has a duty to reflect public opinion and to place before Parliament proposals to address such anxieties. At the end of the day it is for Parliament to decide. In this way confidence in the criminal justice system will be strengthened.

Yours sincerely,
EMILY BLATCH,
Home Office,
Queen Anne's Gate, SW1,
February 17.

Cancer therapies

From the Director-General of the Cancer Research Campaign

Sir, The Cancer Research Campaign believes people with prostate cancer have a right to know about available and appropriate treatments.

I was therefore surprised to see that Professor Miles Irving was suggesting (letter, February 13) that the Campaign was "causing confusion" by advising men concerned about prostate cancer that curative treatment is available as an alternative to a policy of "watchful waiting".

Professor Irving also implies that the Campaign supports the PSA screening test for prostate cancer which, until there is evidence that this is effective, we do not.

Few would dispute that treatment of early invasive cancer improves life expectancy over treatment of metastatic (secondary) disease. Despite the lack of clear evidence at this time on the survival benefits of curative options over a watch and wait policy (and a current Medical Research Council trial is addressing this issue), it seems reasonable to offer the option of curative therapy to men if they wish it. Finally, you stated (article, February 4) that barely £400,000 a year was being spent on prostate cancer research in this country. The Cancer Research Campaign alone is spending more than £1 million annually on research into this disease.

Yours sincerely,
GORDON MCVIE, Director General,
Cancer Research Campaign,
10 Cambridge Terrace, NW1.

Degree standards

From the Vice-Provost of London Guildhall University

Sir, I am concerned at the impression given by today's report, "A-level question is used in degree course exam".

The unit being examined deals with computer hardware, and is taught over 13 weeks to students at South Thames College who do not have A-level computing. Thus there was just one question of an A-level type in an *ab initio* course examination. If all such questions were prohibited, universities up and down the country would have difficulty with units in mathematics for economics, statistics for biologists and the rest.

The syllabus of which this paper is part has been validated by a panel of experts and is monitored through our quality assurance procedures which were satisfactorily audited in 1995 by the Higher Education Quality Council.

A serious debate about progression through a modular degree cannot be conducted simply by juxtaposing individual questions from discrete examination systems with alarmist claims about declining standards of education. I am confident that contemporary graduates are as well prepared and accomplished as ever their predecessors were.

Yours faithfully,
DEAN R. HOPKIN, Vice-Provost,
London Guildhall University,
31 Jewry Street, EC3,
February 17.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Broader view on appointments of women in the Church

From the Dean of St Paul's

Sir, Your plea that the Church of England might be "a broad church" (leading article, February 14) will be greatly welcomed by many. It has been the peculiar genius of the Church of England to contain diversities of theological tradition and religious experience, whilst holding resolutely to the task of offering public ministry to the whole life of the nation.

The significance of the Church of England's decision to ordain women to the priesthood and simultaneously to make pastoral provision for those who are opposed is no more and no less than our desire and determination to be in the best sense of the words a broad church and not a Protestant sect. There are many of us who are glad to serve as priests in a church which has the imagination, the honesty and the courage to live with the ambiguity and the pain that are inseparable from these things.

Let it not be forgotten that the integrity of the Church of England stands or falls not by its position in law as the established Church but by its continuing commitment to the principles of catholicism and reformation. Key words in our Anglican vocabulary are not liberalism and compromise, but liberality and comprehensiveness.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MOSES,
The Deanery,
9 Amen Court, EC4,
February 14.

From Mrs Sally Barnes

Sir, Far from causing a split, the appointment of a woman priest to St Paul's (report, February 13) is uniting the cathedral with the rest of the diocese and bringing it into line with mainstream Anglican practice.

Two thousand people of all ages, many of them from other churches or of no religious affiliation, visit the cathedral daily. The presence of a woman priest alongside her male col-

leagues will affirm to them the position of women within the Church of England. It will also give a positive and public signal to women and men, in and outside the Church, that age and gender are no longer an acceptable means of discrimination in any walk of life.

With over 80 women priests in London, congregations and chaplaincies everywhere are now appreciating the benefits of women's priestly ministry. They, with Londoners throughout the diocese, will join us in welcoming the appointment of the Reverend Lucy Winkett to St Paul's and all that she brings.

Yours faithfully,
SALLY BARNES,
(Secretary to the London committee, WATCH (Women and the Church)),
94 Hamilton Road, NW11,
February 18.

From Canon R. J. Halliburton

Sir, I am grateful to you for your discerning and balanced leading article. Certainly, if the Church of England has any claims to belong to the one holy catholic and apostolic church, then it must continue to admit both integrities of belief on the issue of the ordination of women to the priesthood.

My own opposition to such ordinations is not based on prejudice against women in positions of leadership and responsibility, but on consideration for our unity with the rest of Christendom. The few of us in the Anglican tradition who for many years now have been involved in the ecumenical movement and knowing and loving both Europe (Eastern and Western) and the Third World remain profoundly concerned that Christians should work together.

We believe that we are one church and one ministry with Roman Catholics, Orthodox and many Lutherans in the apostolic succession, and that we should work together, pray together and share one another's ministry. We are bound to have some disagree-

ments. But we should take the greatest care to move forward together and not as a group of independent bodies who believe themselves entitled to be creative and innovative where they see fit.

The General Synod decision of 1992 was taken by people who seem to care nothing and know nothing about our fellow Christians in many other parts of the world who are cutting deep swaths into unbelief and injustice but are agreed that, as yet, it is not appropriate to ordain women to the priesthood.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN HALLIBURTON,
1 Amen Court, EC4,
February 15.

From Mr William E. Bridge

Sir, You report that the self-confessed "almost tone deaf" Dean of St Paul's, Dr John Moses, has said that the remarkable ability of the woman candidate as a soprano singer made her the strongest candidate for the appointment as a minor canon of St Paul's Cathedral. Apparently the other candidates were all male.

The various inventions and devices being used to secure the appointment of a priestess never cease to amaze; but this must surely top them all.

Yours sincerely,
WILLIAM E. BRIDGE,
175 Crofton Road,
Orrington, Kent,
February 13.

From the Reverend M. E. Percival

Sir, May I inquire how many men in the past have been appointed as minor canons six months after their ordination as priests?

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN E. PERCIVAL,
12 Moorfield Road,
Woodbridge, Suffolk,
February 14.

Political realities of long-term care

From the Chairman of the Continuing Care Conference, and others

Sir, Each year some 40,000 people have to sell their homes to pay for care and at least one in four of today's older people will need a high level of care in their lifetime. These are uncomfortable facts and many people may have difficulty facing them. Sadly, it would appear that the political parties also have difficulty facing up to the importance, and immediacy, of the issues.

As members of the Continuing Care Conference, we believe that the funding and provision of long-term care requires nothing less than a coherent, national framework within which to develop a range of solutions to meet different needs. Tomorrow we launch our own manifesto which concentrates on three major points: securing funding, guaranteeing standards and

developing awareness.

We look forward to seeing clear statements of policy in each party's election manifesto and a commitment to action within the first 18 months of the next Parliament. Long-term care matters to all voters — not just the 24 per cent of voters who are pensioners: they deserve nothing less.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL SEYMOUR,
Chairman, Continuing Care Conference,
SALLY GREENGROSS
(Age Concern England),
MERVYN KOHLER
(Help the Aged),
CHAI PATEL
(TC Group plc),
B. WOOD
(PPP Lifetime Care plc),
Continuing Care Conference,
12 Little College Street, SW1,
February 18.

Trial by media

From Mr N. B. C. Eveleigh

Sir, A real concern in the difficult and tragic situation surrounding the Stephen Lawrence case (letters, February 17) is that the young men named by the *Daily Mail* do not have the financial resources to obtain satisfaction through a libel case. Can I suggest that the *Mail* offers to underwrite their legal expenses if they wish to bring a charge of libel.

Bearing in mind that they maintained their right of silence at the inquest when they might have been expected to demonstrate their innocence, I doubt that this would cost the newspaper very much. In this way it would demonstrate its recognition that trial by media is normally unacceptable.

Yours sincerely,
NICK EVELEIGH,
Hodges Farmhouse,
Frittenden,
Cranbrook, Kent,
February 15.

British Council

From Sir John Hanson, Director-General of the British Council

Sir, Your report (February 14; see also letters January 28, 30) may have given the impression that all the British Council's lending libraries have been closed in every Western European country except France. In fact out of 21 libraries in Western Europe 15 currently offer lending services to library members. We have never aimed to run general public library services which serve the needs of all citizens at the British taxpayer's expense. All 21 provide a reference collection, information about Britain and, increasingly, modern electronic services.

Outside Western Europe the Council operates a further 172 libraries and information centres, 122 of which also lend books to their subscribers.

Overall these services bring millions of people each year into contact with Britain, its culture, its expertise and the English language. Our main problem is finding the resources to keep up with the overwhelming demand.

Yours faithfully,
J. G. HANSON, Director-General,
The British Council,
10 Spring Gardens, SW1,
February 17.

Latchkey children

From Mr A. J. Dille

Sir, Dr David Walter contrasts the way Singapore and Britain face the issue of working parents and their children's needs (letter, February 12). I know Singapore well and have a great admiration for Lee Kuan Yew, but when he suggests that perhaps children would be better cared for if they could stay on at school to do their homework until a parent returns home, it is not a "mature discussion between government and people to solve everyday problems" — it happens.

If children stay at school to do "homework" it is, of course, no longer homework. The school day is simply extended. The value of homework, if well set, lies in doing it at home.

Yours sincerely,
A. J. DILLEY,
46 Ambleside Drive,
Spalding, Lincolnshire,
February 12.

Fish and pheromones

From Mr J. K. Brennand

Sir, The spelling of the fly is Tupp's Indispensable, not Tupp (article, February 14; letters, February 8).

An essential ingredient of this fly, invented by R. S. Austin, is ram's wool, taken from the underparts, or more specifically scrotum, of a tup. When this secret was divulged to the famous angler G. E. M. Skues he named the fly Tupp's Indispensable. This surely puts a different complexion on the debate on pheromones and female angling prowess.

I agree with Ms Wilma Paterson's letter — let us give credit to the ladies for their skill as anglers, remembering that the *sine qua non* for outstanding success in salmon fishing is the opportunity to fish first-class water. The three record-breakers referred to by Simon Jenkins had this good fortune, and made the most of it.

Yours sincerely,
J. K. BRENNAND,
1 Brompton Terrace, Perth, Tayside.

Business letters, page 29

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

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Open up, in the name of the licence fee

It was a mistake to go to the BBC governors' seminar the morning after the Campaign for Freedom of Information awards. My head was throbbing with cases of the national food for thought that something is open when it is really shut. Like the BBC's mind on the digital future. We had been invited — assorted people with an interest in broadcasting, with the correct sprinkling of ethnic dress and regional representation — to participate in an exercise in "accountability". The BBC was to explain its proposals and then we could... er, what?

A 12-year-old could have spotted the loopholes in the BBC's careful wording. We were there because the BBC is obliged "to listen to the public's views". The views submitted will help to influence our final decision. Comments are sought on "the content, mixture and range of services" the BBC is proposing.

Just how, for example, can its new digital 24-hour news service be made "distinctive"? Nothing about "whether", in other words, only about "how". Even as we met, the consultation document outlining the channels was being printed.

That was just as well because devastating criticism then flew from all sides to say that the BBC is on the wrong track.

BBC management were accused of starving present programmes, such as *Question Time*, to pour resources into an uncertain and unknowable future. They were told that digital television as a common form of viewing may be 20 years off and that the desire for multichannel choice, apart from sport and movie channels, is unproven. They were urged to concentrate on problems that affect the whole audience now: the drift of sport away from the BBC, the coming threat to its audiences of the new terrestrial Channel 5, the apparent inability to find anybody to head BBC drama...

I cannot fault the BBC's wish to develop new digital services — so long as this is done slowly. It seems quite right to work on new channels, to be available free to any licence fee payer who may in future wish to invest in the extra equipment needed to receive them. Wider screens, clearer pictures, a round-the-clock news channel and add-on extras — recipes, lessons, repeat showings of programmes shown on BBC1 and BBC2 — all may be very nice to have.

Where I part company with the plans — sorry, the proposed plans — is the point where they assume that the BBC must develop new thematic, commercial channels for the world market. I don't like these, for two reasons. They spoil the BBC's reputation as a non-commercial service. And they appear to be subsidised by the money we, the licence payers, have contributed in compulsory fees — a financial cushion that

the BBC's commercial competitors do not enjoy. The BBC insists that these commercial channels, such as those on the Continent paid for by subscription or advertising, cost the licence fee payer absolutely nothing. It swears that, far from being cross-subsidised by the licence fee, these channels pay the domestic BBC the full market rate for any programmes they take. It declares that the accounting procedures used make the prices paid clear and transparent.

Transparent to whom? Only to the BBC's hired accountants. They report their findings to the governors. And will the figures be published? "We will publish what it is appropriate to publish" is the reply.

But wait. How can any programme made or commissioned by the domestic BBC be anything other than subsidised by the vast resources accumulated by the £1.5 billion a year received in licence fees? What is worse, the BBC's frenzied pursuit of commercial ventures obscures the plain truth that such revenue will never amount to anything more than pin money for the BBC. It will never replace, or even help to lower, the licence fee. And it obscures the fee's virtue as the source of the respect for what is now called the BBC's "brand name".

Fair play would seem to require that the BBC's accounting must be not only open but seen to be open. A good start would be to reveal what it pays Camelot for televising the National Lottery.

The public would like to know. Many think that Camelot should pay the BBC for this free publicity. The BBC says its lips are sealed by "commercial confidentiality". A familiar excuse, as Sir Richard Scott noted last week, used within government and quasi-governmental bodies, for keeping secret information that it is in the public interest to know.

What lies hidden under the BBC's Camelot cloak? My guess is shame. The BBC forks out this secret sum for the right to broadcast a programme that has nothing distinctive about it except the capacity to snare an easy 12 or more million viewers. In its defence, the BBC points out that the lottery contract goes out to competitive tender and that next time round (maybe this autumn: the length of the existing contract is another secret) the BBC could be disadvantaged by letting its competitors know the amount of its bid.

But the size of the ITV franchise bids is made public once the winners are declared. Why shouldn't the BBC gamble, since the money comes out of our pockets? If we had a Freedom of Information Act, we might be able to find out. Until such day, all we can do is ask the BBC not to invite suggestions on matters on which its mind is made up.



BRENDA MADDOX

Marr goes for Mail features

IN HIS latest quest for success at *The Independent*, the paper's Editor, Andrew Marr, is raiding the *Daily Mail*'s features department. The Editor has hired Deborah Ross, one of the paper's highest-paid feature writers, and Sam Taylor, a commissioning editor.

This change of attitude is interesting. When Marr first took the Editor's chair last year, he was determined to dispense with the traditional concept of leading on hard news stories and started devoting his front page to reviews of art exhibitions and comment pieces while decrying the *Mail* for "dirty raincoat journalism". The *Mail*'s recent rise in circulation could have changed his mind.

In a separate development, Channel 5, which has insisted that its soap will eschew the kind of lesbian-kiss, body-under-the-patio sensationalism common in other mainstream soaps, has let slip that one of the principal characters will be killed off within four weeks of launch. A CS insider says: "It is a tragic death, but it is organic to the plot." So that's all right, then.

Family planning

THE producers of Channel 5's soap, *Family Affairs*, were taking no chances when casting the character of Bradley, the pet cat who belongs to the Haris, the programme's central family. Just in case the real-life moggie who plays



Marr: Mail-chasing

Crossing Chryss

THE BBC producer Peter Swain had a shock in Ireland while shooting *Branded*, a documentary series. Swain was filming Tony O'Reilly, newspaper magnate, and his wife, Chryss, as they hosted a swanky event at Leopardstown; guests included Lord Callaghan of Cardiff and Jean Kennedy-Smith. O'Reilly agreed to be filmed with his horse, Woodborough, before it took part in the big event of the day, the Phoenix Stakes. The shoot was abruptly terminated by his wife, however, who claimed that filming a horse before a race brings bad luck.

As it happened, Woodborough did not win, and as Swain dashed to the winner's enclosure he bumped into an irate Mrs O, who pointed an aggressive finger and snarled: "You, it's all your fault." Her husband gave an embarrassed look skywards.

Ramours swirl around Fleet Street about the destiny of *Jan Monk*, the former deputy editor of *The Express*, who was last week spotted leaving a cosy chat with the power-hungry Bridget Rowe, the managing director of *The People* and the *Sunday Mirror*, who last week assumed editorial control of the latter after squeezing out Amanda Platell, the acting Editor.



Amanda de Cadenet listed

World women

IT WAS only a matter of time before September Films, producers of the ITV series *Hollywood Women*, *Hollywood Men*, *Hollywood etc.* turned their attentions to Blighty. The company has won a commission to make *UK Women*, a four-part prime-time series.

Made by the same team behind the controversial *Hollywood Lovers*, the programme promises to include interviews with an eclectic mix of female celebrities and "ordinary women". The producers' wish-list of interviewees is thought to include everyone

from Joan Bakewell and Amanda de Cadenet, to Dame Barbara Cartland, Gemma Khan (née Goldsmith), Paula Yates and Nicola Horlick.

LORD HOLLICK, the socialist millionaire and chief executive of *United News and Media*, boosted his not inconsiderable fortune last week after England's 1-0 defeat at Wembley. Hollick, who attended the game as a guest of Greg Dyke, Pearson TV's forty-mad boss, won a sweepstake held by the 12 guests at the table. He pocketed a princely £22.

Quite contrary

MAIRE Geoghegan-Quinn, the first woman minister in Irish history, quit politics in a fury over media intrusion in her family life. She claimed that press and broadcast coverage of her son's expulsion from his West of Ireland boarding school was the final straw. A week later, however, she emerged in the employ of... er, the media.

Mrs Geoghegan-Quinn is to write a weekly political column for *The Irish Times* and for two weeks will host one of Ireland's most successful phone-in radio programmes. KTE's *LiveLine* is renowned for the niggling personal questions it asks its listeners.

Under an influence

THE advertising industry is staging a timely political debate at the House of Commons on March 24 at which the potentially alarming motion "Advertising is more influential than politics" will be discussed.

The debate will be thrashed out between two senior industry players: Stephen Carter, managing director of J Walter Thompson, and Hugh Burdett, chairman of Court Burdett & Goss. Both are MPs, both of whom have to confirm, in front of a gallery of 100 advertisers, agency representatives, MPs and civil servants.

Mr Carter, who will be speaking for the motion, says: "My opinion is that advertising is more influential, which is obviously a sad reflection on politics today," while Mr Burdett says: "Advertising reflects society rather than shapes it. I like to think I have helped

to sell a few boxes of things, but I haven't affected society at all."

ADLAND has a starring role in a weekend of TV programmes dedicated to stress in the workplace. EBN, the cable and satellite channel, has homed in on the industry for its *Insider's Guide to Business* slot next Saturday. The agency under scrutiny is Bates Dorland, where creative executives evidently enjoy regular games of table tennis to clear their minds. They can "de-stress" in the "Egg", a room full of all forms of diverting stimulants, from video games to CDs.

Despite the creative director's assertions that advertising is "a very stressful business" where "9-5 means 9pm to 5am", the unfortunate abiding mem-

ory from the programme is of an art director enjoying a game of table tennis and admitting: "All my mates think I work in a playground."

A QUESTION mark was placed over the future of small agency brands this week when the Cordant-owned K Advertising was merged with its sister shop, Saatchi & Saatchi. The agency last year notched up billings of only £30 million, placing it outside the top 30 ranking of advertising companies.

The merger means that five of K's 39 employees are made redundant, along with one Saatchi executive. It also means that Saatchi inherits instant client clashes between its own Norwich Union and Castlemaine XXXX business and K's Commercial Union and Carlsberg accounts.

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I only employ people I believe will be successful and who I'm happy to invest time and money in training. So if you can spend half an hour at my company to find out more, then in return I will be totally honest with you and tell you whether or not this is for you.

If this advertisement makes sense to you then call me, Phillip Armstrong on: 0171 915 9577



MEDIA ADMINISTRATORS KNIGHTSBRIDGE

MEDIA/LEGAL DEPARTMENT ASSISTANT
REQUIRED FOR INHOUSE LAWYERS. A BACKGROUND IN TV OR LAW WOULD BE A DEFINITE ADVANTAGE. WE NEED SECRETARIAL SKILLS INCLUDING AUDIO AND COMPUTER PROFICIENCY (MICROSOFT WORD USED) AND SOMEONE WITH ENTHUSIASM TO BECOME INVOLVED IN A REAL SUPPORT ROLE.

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Why we must save the Gang On Four



Under threat? Today presenters, from the left, James Naughtie, Anna Ford, John Humphrys and Sue MacGregor. The programme faces a review

Michael Gove champions the cause of BBC Radio 4's embattled Today programme

John Humphrys should beware the dangers of becoming forever Young. Next week, the Today presenter will exchange the cockpit of Studio 4A for the easy chair of the JY prog. While Jimmy Young is away, Humphrys will juggle the Matt Monro LPs, recipes and interviews on Radio 2's mid-morning show.

The newsman's holiday should present no problem for an accomplished broadcaster who combines ubiquity with authority. But the skill with which Humphrys will undoubtedly fill Young's slippers could, unwittingly, strengthen the hand of those anxious to reform the shows on which Humphrys's reputation rests.

The BBC has announced its intention to review its news and current affairs output after the election and, as with all the best reviews, conclusions have been reached and leaked well before the process has begun. The makers of *Newsnight* and *Today* have been singled out, like intellectuals in the Cultural Revolution, as ripe for re-education.

The names of Humphrys and James Naughtie have been whispered in connection with complaints about "verbal punch-ups" and "alienating arguments". Comparisons with the more "accessible" approach to news of Radio 5 Live have been made inside the corporation by the Red Guards. Too practised a display on Radio 2 by Humphrys might see the same anonymous managers suggest that he had found his natural sunset home

and the time had come for new voices to introduce a "fresher" *Today*, less tied to the "Westminster agenda".

I do not have access to the BBC's managers take as their authority for contemplating change, but I do have some-thing denied to most of those who presume to dictate *Today*'s future — recent experience of working on the programme.

For years now, BBC managers have tried to "free *Today*" from the tyranny of the ten-past-eight rendezvous with Michael Heseltine. Most editors I knew would happily have broadened the programme's range of interviewees. They were constrained, however, not by lack of imagination but by a commitment to professionalism.

Whatever the attractions of straying away from SW1, it would have been a betrayal of the audience to neglect the issues that mattered and the individuals who influenced them. This Monday morning it was the debate on Douglas Hogg which dominated the front page of serious newspapers and it was on *Today* that Mr Hogg mounted his defence. That is what the audience has come to expect.

Today's audience is not short of choices. No segment of the radio market is as fiercely contested as breakfast. Yet six million continue to choose

Today every week, because it treats them like adults and assumes they are intelligent enough to follow an argument and serious enough to want to.

The BBC management, though, does not want only to attract more men than anyone else, it wants youth. An anonymous spokesman, presenting a justification for the review, told *The Daily Telegraph*: "We have launched Radio 5 Live to appeal to that market [young males] more, but we still feel we are missing out on younger audiences and on the C1, C2 groups."

Comparisons with Radio 5 Live are instructive, but perhaps not in a way which is congenial to those who want to meet a non-existent challenge and make an unnecessary change.

Even though it was marketed as "Radio 5 Live" and its breakfast show is one of many excellent programmes, Radio 5 Live is nowhere near as successful as *Today*. Not just in attracting listeners who wish to sound off but also those who are off to the Ministry of Sound.

Last autumn, before Radio 5 Live benefited from the arrival of the former *Today* Editor Roger Mosey, its breakfast show had an average audience at any one time of 300,000. *Today*, during the same period, attracted two million listeners between 7.10 and 8. A greater proportion of

Radio 5 Live's audience than is normal for the BBC is certainly drawn from the non-metropolitan, under-45 pool in which *Today* is now being encouraged to fish. But mixing relatives and absolutes is as dangerous as mixing Absolut and vermouth.

Given that *Today* has 600 per cent of Radio 5 Live's audience at breakfast means that even though a smaller proportion of *Today*'s audience is young and provincial, in absolute terms it still reaches far more "blokes" than the station set up for them. The average twentyish plasterer in Redditch, in so far as he exists, actually prefers Jim Naughtie to the laddish alternative a wrist-twist away.

It is not surprising why. The market research deployed by the BBC's briefers may be used to suggest that "audiences shrink from the argumentative approach" of Naughtie and Humphrys, but the listeners I encountered on the road for *Today* took quite the opposite view.

Humphrys and Naughtie are heroes. If anything, they weren't aggressive enough for the *Today* audience. Of course the public were occasionally exasperated by what they heard. It was, however, the equivocation of politicians who took refuge in statistics even flimsier than broadcast market research which enraged listeners, not attempts by the interviewer to get to the point. Given the failure of so many of our legislators properly to hold the executive to account that responsibility increasingly falls on the present-

ers of *Today*. Those who undermine them do so democracy a disservice.

They also underestimate an audience that knows power is wielded in Westminster and wants to see it examined there, instead of having politics viewed through the wrong end of the telescope in the name of provincial correctness.

Rather than *Today* imitating new blokes on the block, its rivals should set their sights on the market leader. In appointing Roger Mosey to run Radio 5 Live, the BBC has tacitly admitted as much. Instead of embracing a Cultural Revolution, the BBC should learn from Humphrys, Naughtie, MacGregor and Ford — the Gang on 4.

Michael Gove was a reporter on the *Today* programme from July 1994 to January 1996

Mail campaign mirrors Foot case

Bouquets and brickbats for Dacre crusade

There is no point starting a controversial newspaper campaign unless it is pursued with determination and vigour. That is exactly what Paul Dacre, Editor of the *Daily Mail*, has been doing since he published a front page last Friday — as memorable as *The Guardian's* A Liar and a Cheat of last year — accusing five men of being "Murderers". Let them sue us if we are wrong, he declared defiantly.

Justice had been effectively neutered after the murder of Stephen Lawrence, the *Mail* declared next day. The police were frustrated, the courts helpless, and a gang of evil and morose thugs had got away with murder. A special page of letters yesterday showed that Dacre's campaign had won overwhelming support from his readers.

His campaign has already won powerful critics. Lord Donaldson of Lynton, the former Master of the Rolls, accused the *Mail* of contempt of court.

The *Times* argued that the place of newspapers was in the press gallery, not as advocates for the prosecution. Andrew Marr, Editor of *The Independent*, admitted that his first reaction had been an admiring gasp but said that newspapers were not juries, nor were editors judges. The *Independent* on Sunday

agreed. But there has also been support for Dacre from the Left and the Right. It was time to cheer when the *Mail* was ready to have a go at racists, said *The Guardian*. Yes, the *Mail* had abused its power and wealth, argued Janet Daley, the *Daily Telegraph's* columnist, but thousands of black people would now see Britain as a fairer and more decent place.

"Absolutely excellent," was also the reaction of Paul Foot, Britain's most eminent investigative journalist. Foot, usually an instinctive opponent of Dacre, described his "gutty performance" as a "source of wonderment". An editor who starts a controversial campaign, however thick his hide, can feel lonely, exposed and vulnerable. Yet the success of one of Foot's investigations many years ago ought to be a source of comfort to Dacre.

Foot was on the then *Daily Mirror* in 1981 when Florence Siddons arrived to see him. Her granddaughter Lynn, aged 17, had been stabbed to death three years earlier. A 14-year-old boy, Fitzroy Brookes, who had been walking with her when she was attacked, had been charged but acquitted because it had become obvious in court that the real murderer was the boy's stepfather, Michael Brookes.

Subsequently, Brookes's wife had made a statement to lawyers acting for the Siddons family about his habit of sticking knives into women for enjoyment. Derbyshire police

refused to reopen the inquiry. So Mrs Siddons was sent to Foot by Philip Whitehead, the local Labour MP. After hearing her story, Foot explained that the obvious solution — to print the case against Brookes and name him as a child murderer — seemed impossible because of the libel law.

"But it's the truth, Mr Foot," she said. "This man murdered Lynn and he's getting away with it."

Foot worked on the evidence for months and finally battered the *Mirror's* lawyer and then — after being asked if he was trying to ruin the paper for ever — Tony Miles, the *Mirror's* chairman, into submission.

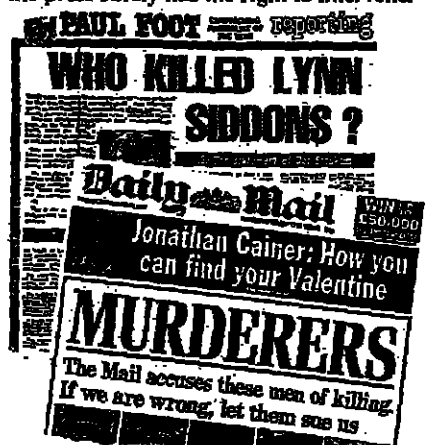
On April 8, 1981, under the headline "Who Killed Lynn Siddons?", the *Mirror* published Foot's answer, which said effectively that the guilty man was Michael Brookes.

As Foot wrote later in *The Independent*, nothing happened. There was no libel action, no action from Derbyshire police. But Mrs Siddons was determined to get justice for her granddaughter. Again and again she went to see Foot, who sustained his campaign for years — but it was 15 years before she achieved her victory.

Only last year was Brookes finally convicted of murder and jailed for life.

The moral for Dacre is that he may be in for a long fight which will be won only by a sustained campaign. As Harold Evans, Editor of *The Sunday Times* during the thalidomide campaign, used to say, readers notice a campaign only when journalists are bored with it. Foot is familiar with the abuse — the gutter press denying five men a fair trial — that Dacre will meet. It is difficult, he admits, to set firm principles in such cases. Journalists are usually trying to get people out of prison, not to put them inside. Yet when the courts don't convict guilty people, the press surely has the right to intervene.

Out on a limb: the *Mail* and *Mirror*



Out on a limb: the *Mail* and *Mirror*

AN EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER

THE TIMES

Exclusive screenings of The Crucible

Readers of *The Times* have the chance to enjoy an exclusive preview screening of

The Crucible, with Academy Award winner Daniel Day-Lewis, Winona Ryder and Joan Allen.

Author Arthur Miller wrote the screenplay for *The Crucible*, adapting his stage play about a group of teenage girls accused of witchcraft in Salem in 1692. The film, directed by Nicholas Hytner (director of *The Madness of King George*) is a drama about collective evil and personal guilt.

SHOWCASE (6.30-7pm): Birmingham: Erdington; Bristol: Avon Meads; Coventry: Cross Point; Glasgow: Showcase Leisure Park; Bargaeddie; Leeds: Bailey; Liverpool: Norris Green; Manchester: Belle Vue; Nottingham: Lenton; Peterborough: Boongate; Reading: Winkles; Stockton: Teesside Leisure Park; Walsall: Bentley Mill Way.

WARNER (6.30pm): Acton: Royal Leisure Cinema; Cambridge: Grafton Centre; Croydon: Lathams Way; Finchley: Great North Leisure Park; Harrow: St Georges Shopping & Leisure Centre.

ODEON (6.30pm): London: 40 Leicester Square.

***UCI (6.30-7pm):** Please collect your two free tickets for UCI cinemas after 1pm on Friday, February 21: Milton Keynes: UCI 10, The Point, 602 Midsummer Boulevard; Sheffield: UCI 10, Crystal Peaks Shopping Centre; Dudley: UCI 10, Merryhill Centre; Derby: UCI 10, Meteor Centre; West Thurrock: UCI 10, Lakeside Retail Park; Swansea: UCI 10, Quay Parade, Parc Tawe; Poole: UCI 10, Tower Park; Preston: UCI 10, Riversway, Ashton on Ribble; Bracknell: UCI 10, The Point, Skimped Hill Lane; Lee Valley: UCI 12, Picketts Lock, Edmonton.



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Collect four differently numbered tokens from *The Times* and attach them to the voucher which will be published tomorrow. Present the completed voucher and tokens at one of the cinemas listed at the specified time of the screening (not before — except for UCI cinemas, see left*). The voucher entitles you to two seats only for a screening of *The Crucible* on Monday, February 24, 1997. Seats will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and are subject to availability.

THE TIMES
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TICKETS
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CHANGING TIMES

TV and radio celebrate a longstanding joke

The show was called *The Perfect Fool* and on February 19, 1922, it may well have seemed a perfectly foolish idea. But New York radio station WJZ was making broadcasting history when it used a live studio audience for the first time. Since that broadcast — 75 years ago — radio and television shows throughout the world have come to rely heavily on the unpaid services of members of the public.

Initially, the BBC was slow to follow the American station's example. In Britain, serious speakers and musicians preferred to commune with the microphone in solitary splendour, declaring that they would be embarrassed by a lot of outsiders sitting and gawping at them.

However, unscrupulous performers such as comedians and variety acts, who were used to playing to the gallery, felt inhibited with only a microphone and took to bringing their friends into the recording studios.

Eventually, the BBC decided to make the use of studio audiences official. On May 7, 1924, it invited listeners to identify two voices — an announcer and performer — and a musical item. The winners were invited to make up the first audience in a British recording studio. Broadcast House contained one studio that could squeeze in 45 people, while another held 30. A waiting list soon built up.

Unlike present television and radio programmes, there was no warm-up man to encourage the audience to laugh and joke before the show began. Instead, a stage manager would stroll into the studio five minutes before the start and advise

The ubiquitous studio audience is 75 years old, says Jonathan Sale

the audience to applaud only when they thought performances deserved it. He also warned them not to be alarmed by the red light over the studio door. Despite this gloomy presence, in 1928, listeners complained that prolonged laughter from studio audiences prevented listeners from hearing the jokes. As a result, the BBC decided to halve audience numbers to keep the noise down.

The BBC's primitive television service managed a world first on Christmas Eve 1936 when an audience was assembled for a variety show called *Harry Pringle's Old Veterans*. Since then the use of live audiences for television shows has become a BBC tradition. "We do 600 shows at Television Centre," says the BBC spokeswoman Sian Healey, "and about 200,000 people come in each year."

Yet in 1949, studio audiences nearly became extinct. In an inglorious milestone of media history, the *Hank McCune Show* on America's NBC television became the first programme to exchange a real audience for canned laughter. Canned laughter became widely used by American comedy shows; however, it consistently failed to catch on in Britain.

Terry Jones, of Monty Python's *Flying*

Circus, says real laughter is essential: "The audience tells you if something is funny or not. We would edit the show according to the audience reaction."

The biggest problem for the BBC is ensuring that the people are on the right wavelength, which was not the case in the first *Python* show. "They were all old people who seemed to think they were coming to see a real circus. After that we appealed to the BBC ticket distributors to provide us with a decent audience."

When launching a new show today, Audience Services is more careful. For a stand-up comedy series, they reach fans by using the mailing lists of comedy clubs. Gathering fans for established shows such as *Noel's House Party* and *Top of the Pops* is more straightforward as they have long waiting lists.

The BBC Radio Ticket Unit advertises in *Time Out* or takes names from a vast waiting list, depending on the kind of show it is recruiting for.

One of the BBC's most important studio audiences is used for *Question Time*. To obtain a balanced auditorium, the programme organisers ask for political inclinations in advance and, in the studio, make the audience watch a selection of bulletins so that they are fully acquainted with the week's news before they pose questions to the panel.

Despite the BBC's precautions, live audiences remain as unpredictable now as they were 75 years ago. Sometimes they laugh more during a retake than they did when hearing the joke for the first time. Sometimes they don't laugh at all. Sometimes, as happened to Bernard Levin in *That Was The Week That Was*, they even try to hit the presenter — an opportunity denied to those of us who stay at home.

هكذا من الرأى

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 19 1997

Investcorp wins Welcome Break

Granada sells £566m of Forte assets

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

GRANADA GROUP continued to clear the decks of former Forte assets yesterday with the sale of the Welcome Break service station chain and the Westbury hotels in London and New York for a combined price of £566 million.

Granada has raised £1.2 billion from disposals since it won its £3.9 billion takeover battle for Forte a year ago.

The Welcome Break chain, which Granada had to sell by the end of April to avoid a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, was sold for £476 million to Investcorp. The investment group, based in Bahrain, had stiff competition for the 21-strong chain from Asda and C&V, the venture capital group.

Chelsfield, the property com-

pany, bought the two Westbury hotels for £90 million.

The sale prices were well ahead of market expectations and mean that Granada has made a total profit of £206 million over book value from its disposals programme.

Eleven hotels in the Exclusive hotel chain, including the Ritz in Rome and Plaza Athenae in Paris, are still to be sold although the company said it was confident of making the sales over the next couple of months. Granada will also put its 63 per cent stake in the Savoy Hotel Group, valued at about £200 million, up for auction. Granada has already sold the Hyde Park Hotel in London, the King George V in Paris and Sandy Lane in Barbados for about £230 million.

But the company confirmed that it will not sell the Grosvenor House hotel in London. Granada is believed to have faced difficulty finding bidders willing to match the £350 million price tag. The company is understood to be aiming to double profits at the 600-room hotel to £40 million over the next couple of years.

Elliott Bernard, chairman of Chelsfield, said the company is looking to develop the retail potential of the Westbury hotels, which occupy prime sites in Bond Street, London and Madison Avenue, New York. The company believes it can create up to four units in the London hotel with about 28,000 sq ft of retailing space. Chelsfield will spend \$15 million on the conversion and aims to attract rents of \$4 mil-

lion in Madison Avenue and £2 million from Bond Street.

Granada said that net proceeds of the Westbury sales will be £50 million, £9.5 million above book value, after the unwinding of leasing arrangements at the Westbury in New York. Last year the hotels produced pre-tax profits of £5.1 million.

Michael Guthrie, previously chief executive of the Pavilion motorway service station chain, will become chief executive of Welcome Break. Mr Guthrie is expected to serve in this capacity for at least a year before becoming chairman.

Richard Warner, a member of Investcorp's management committee, said Welcome Break had been under-marketed and underdeveloped. Investcorp believes there is a significant opportunity to improve profitability and quality through a £50 million investment programme and expansion. Investcorp is looking at other acquisition opportunities in the UK. Last year Welcome Break earned operating profits of £32 million on turnover of £335 million.

Granada said the sale price of Welcome Break was £143 million above book value. Granada will retain the chain's airports and trunk roads businesses which made an operating profit of more than £5 million last year.

But the City was relatively unmoved by the sales and Granada shares fell 1p to 928.5p. Chelsfield shares were unchanged at 328.5p.

Pennington, page 27



Karen Brady, managing director of Birmingham City, will get share options worth £375,000 in the football club's £25 million AIM flotation. Page 26

Shares slide at Barclays in spite of £2.4bn profit

BY ROBERT MILLER, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

SHARES in Barclays fell yesterday in spite of the bank unveiling a 13 per cent rise in full-year profits to £2.4 billion and pledging to return £500 million to shareholders during the year.

The share price tumbled 70.5p to close at 1129p on the ground that the figures were at the lower end of the market's expectations and because of the sharper than predicted fall in operating profits at BZW, the global investment banking arm of Barclays, which chipped in £204 million, against £289 million in 1995.

Martin Taylor, chief executive of Barclays, went out of his way yesterday to give his personal support to the whole-sale changes of staff and strategy that have taken place at BZW. These began with the arrival last September of Bill Harrison from Robert Fleming to become chief executive of BZW.

The recruitment of expensive senior staff and the redundancies that followed were responsible for almost the entire fall in the profits from the investment banking division. Costs rose to £1.1 billion, from £901 million previously, and provisions were up £10 million to £12 million.

Without the personnel costs, and those associated with the move to new offices at Canary Wharf in London's Docklands later this year, BZW saw its total income rise to £1.3 billion, from £1.2 billion, in the year to December 31.

Barclays, which saw its earnings per share increase to 104.2p from 83.6p last time, said that it had still to decide the best mechanism for returning the £500 million earmarked for shareholders. On

the past three occasions, including the half-time results last August, Barclays has taken the share buyback route. One alternative is for the bank to pay a special dividend although that could have unwelcome tax implications for some investors.

On the mainstream dividend, Barclays lifted its final payout to 20p, payable on April 29, from 16.5p previously, making a total for the year of 31.5p, against 26p last time.

Barclays reported substantially increased profits in almost all of its business areas and a fall in bad debt provisions to £215 million, from £396 million in 1995. Profits in UK personal banking rose to £773 million, against £659

Tempus 28
City Diary 29

million, while business banking was up £47 million at £801 million. Barclaycard signed up more than 900,000 new accounts.

In the competitive home loans market the cost of incentives rose £4 million to £70 million. The bank's asset management group, which includes Wells Fargo in America and Barclays Unicorn, the UK unit trust business, chipped in a £10 million increase in operating profits to £32 million.

Andrew Buxton, chairman of Barclays, which set aside about £96 million for the staff profit-sharing scheme, said: "As a group we have sought to give value to shareholders while investing substantially in better service for customers and recognising the efforts of our staff."

BUSINESS
TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDEXES		
FTSE 100	6232.5	(-5.5)
Yield	3.63%	
FTSE All share	2111.98	(-1.21)
Nikkei	18470.75	(-279.90)
New York		
Dow Jones	6881.26	(-7.70)
S&P Composite	807.21	(-1.27)

US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(unch)
Long Bond	100 3/4%	
Yield	6.55%	

LONDON MONEY		
3-mth interbank	6 1/4%	(9 1/4%)
Life long gilt	11 1/2%	(11 1/4%)
Future (Mar)		

STERLING

New York	1.6027*	(unch)
London	1.6015	(1.6188)
DM	2.7087	(2.7478)
FF	6.1455	(6.2710)
Sfr	1.4825	(1.5038)
Yen	198.74	(201.18)
S index	96.8	(98.0)

US \$ DOLLAR

DM	1.6883*	(unch)
FF	5.6958*	
Sfr	1.4825	
Yen	123.88*	
S index	104.1	(104.2)

Tokyo close Yen 124.48

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day May \$20.10 (\$20.05)

GOLD

London close \$345.35 (\$344.25)

* denotes midday trading price

Britannic bonus

Shares in Britannic Assurance rose by 67p to 870p, after the group transferred £902 million from its life fund into shareholders' funds. The group will raise its 1996 dividend by 82 per cent and pledge to maintain a progressive dividend policy. Page 26

SmithKline tonic

SmithKline Beecham, the drug giant, raised 1996 pre-tax profits by 14 per cent, to £1.54 billion, although it blamed the strong pound for the loss of £35 million of profits in the fourth quarter. Page 27

Clyde is the loser by a fraction

BY CARL MORTSHED

GULF Canada Resources won its takeover battle for Clyde Petroleum by a hair's breadth with just 51.42 per cent of the shares under its control at yesterday's 1pm deadline.

The £494 million cash offer was successful despite a late attempt by a friendly investor to swing the balance in Clyde's favour. SHV Energy, the private Dutch group that acquired Calor last year, bought four million shares at the 120p-per-share bid price from Global Asset Management. It acquired a further 400,000 shares in the market, giving the Dutch company, which has joint venture gas interests with Clyde in The Netherlands, almost 1 per cent.

Gulf had already bought 29 per cent of Clyde's shares, including a 14 per cent stake held by PDEM, the fund manager. Acceptances received by the deadline yesterday totalled 88.4 million shares, amounting to 21.43 per cent of the company. These are thought to have included some 8 per cent of the company held by Norwich Union. Schroders, the fund manager which has been a strong supporter of Clyde, is not thought to have accepted the bid.

Malcolm Gourlay, Clyde's chairman, said control of the company had passed by the finest of margins. "We are extremely disappointed... However, we do appreciate the strong support shown by a large body of our shareholders," he said.

The bid battle had focused initially on a dispute over the proper method to value Clyde, with Gulf basing its bid on net asset value. Meanwhile Clyde insisted that comparable companies valued on cashflow multiples suggested a much higher price. However, the recent fall in the oil price worked against Clyde and is believed to have left investors fearful of losing Gulf's cash offer.

Tempus, page 28

Clarke welcomes tax and debt figures

BY JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

BRITAIN'S public finances showed a sharp improvement in January with a bumper haul of both corporation tax and VAT receipts which should mean that the Government comfortably under-shoots its own target for borrowing this year.

The Government repaid £5.82 billion of borrowing last month, nearly twice the amount the City had predicted and the biggest monthly surplus since records began in 1989. This left cumulative borrowing in the first ten months of the year at £10.34 billion, a sharp improvement on the £19.34 billion accumulated over the same period a year ago, according to the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics.

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, welcomed the figures as "excellent" and said: "These figures are further confirmation that borrowing is on a clear downward path. We are now comfortably on track for the Budget forecast and I am hopeful we will do even better than that."

In his Budget in November, Mr Clarke announced a Public Sector Borrowing Requirement prediction for the year as a whole of £26.4 billion with a forecast of a £19.2 billion PSBR in the fiscal year 1997-98.

The City said yesterday that borrowing could undershoot this year by several billions and that next year's projection now looks plausible. Keith Davies, UK Economist at

4cast, said: "The strength of January's receipts data suggests that the PSBR is increasingly likely to come in under the £26.4 billion target and suggests that an improving fiscal environment awaits an incoming government — of whichever persuasion."

There was good news on both the revenue and spending sides of the equation. Cumulative corporation tax receipts are now some 17 per cent higher than in the first ten months of last year. For the full year, the Treasury predicted an increase of 10.6 per cent. VAT was also encouraging with cumulative receipts up 15 per cent from last year. Again, VAT receipts look set to beat the Treasury's forecast for the full year of an increase of 10.2 per cent.

Spending is slightly overshooting Treasury projections, up 2.7 per cent so far in the current fiscal year compared with the Treasury's planned increase for the whole year of 2.2 per cent. However, analysts said this overshoot is small with the election so near.



Clarke: "on track"

Governor's remarks hit sterling

STERLING slumped four pence yesterday in reaction to the Bank of England's distinct softening of its demands for higher base rates (Janet Bush writes).

The pound reacted dramatically to testimony before the Commons Treasury Select Committee late on Monday by Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England. He said the need for a rate rise was

now less urgent and sterling's strength recently meant that the Government could hit its 2.5 per cent inflation target at the end of this Parliament.

Sterling's effective index fell to 96.8 at the close yesterday from 98 on Monday. The pound was quoted at DM2.7085 compared with DM2.7473 late on Monday.

The mark was stronger in its own right as investors

baled out of the lira and peseta on doubts about whether they would join the first wave of a single currency. The mark shot up 10 lire after a Belgian newspaper quoted the Governor of Belgium's central bank as saying that monetary union would be better off starting without Italy. The Governor later denied his remarks had referred to Italy, but the damage had been done.

Ahmanson launches \$6bn bid for rival

FROM RICHARD THOMSON
IN NEW YORK

A SURPRISE \$6 billion hostile bid has been launched by H F Ahmanson, America's largest savings and loan (S&L) company, for Great Western Financial, which is ranked number two.

The combined group would have assets of around \$95 billion. S&Ls are America's building societies with their shares listed on the New York stock market.

Ahmanson said it launched the unsolicited bid after discussions about a possible merger failed to make progress. The offer of \$42.53 a share for Great Western represents a 23 per cent premium to Monday's closing price. There was no immediate response from Great Western.

Charles Rinehart, Ahmanson's chairman, said he estimated cost savings of around \$400 million, more than the combined profits of the two S&Ls last year. Both companies are based in the Los Angeles area, where about 200 of their 800 branches would be closed.

The takeover would elevate Ahmanson into new areas of banking, such as cheque accounts, business loans and financial advice, which Great Western has pioneered in the S&L industry. Until recently Ahmanson was restricted to savings accounts and mortgages.

The offer is by far the largest in a wave of consolidations in the S&L industry similar to the merger mania that swept the American banking industry last year.

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Bankers expected to vouch for fraud controls

By ROBERT MILLER
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

SENIOR UK bank directors will in future have to provide annual evidence to the Bank of England that their internal audit systems are robust and that adequate controls are in place to prevent fraud.

The Bank's proposals, published yesterday by its Supervision and Surveillance department and almost certain to come into force, also call for comments on the introduction of a routine bilateral meeting between the Bank's watchdog

and the individual reporting accountant (RA). Commenting on the RA regime in its consultative document, the Bank says that it reached the conclusion that it "is a valuable supervisory tool, but accepts that it does not work as effectively as was hoped when the regime was introduced in 1988".

In order to set out the parameters of responsibility for bank directors and senior managers, as opposed to the statutory rules for auditors, the Bank has said that it will publish a special guidance notice on corporate governance.

This note will spell out the role of the board of directors, the audit committee, senior management and internal audit, and "provide guidance on the high level operating controls which the Bank would expect institutions to have in place".

The Bank supervision team, headed by Michael Foot, added that "there would also be value in requiring an annual statement from the board of directors of each authorised institution given its ultimate responsibility for the system of internal control, for monitoring its effectiveness and for ensuring that the institu-

tion continues to comply with the minimum criteria for authorisation set out in section three of the Banking Act".

On the role of auditors, the Bank — which also published a second paper yesterday on *The Objectives, Standards and Processes of Banking Supervision* — highlighted the professional requirement for lead audit partners who audit listed companies to rotate. The Bank said that the requirement should apply to work carried out for all authorised institutions. The Bank added: "For such work, the cycle should be reduced from seven to five years."

Avon sells division for £60m

Avon Rubber, the car parts producer, is selling its tyre division to Cooper Tire & Rubber of America, for £60 million. The sale generates a £12 million profit, which will be invested in the spare parts supply business. Avon said it is in talks with six potential takeover targets.

The division, which had assets of £45.3 million, claims just 0.1 per cent of the world tyre market. It earned profits of £8.2 million on sales of £111 million last year. Cooper, which only operates in America, will use the division to spearhead its expansion into Europe. Avon shares rose 33.5p to 721.5p.

Roxspur plan

Roxspur, the engineering instruments group, said it plans to acquire businesses, products and brands consistent with its core activities. Pre-tax profits were £771,000 (£536,000 loss) in the half year to December 31. Earnings were 0.21p (0.3p loss). As last year, there is no interim dividend. However, the board expects to pay a final dividend, subject to the group's recovery.

Profits lift

Clondalkin, the Irish print and packaging group, announced a 22 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to a record 17c22.3 million for the year to December 1996. A final dividend of 4.2p, payable on April 11, lifts the total 10 per cent to 6.6p.

Stadium rise

Stadium Group, the plastic and electronics company, lifted pre-tax profits to £4.7 million (£4 million) in 1996. Earnings were unchanged at 11.5p. A final dividend of 3p makes a maiden total of 4p.

ABP hit

Associated British Ports is taking a £3 million charge against its planned withdrawal from Universal Pipe Coaters, a joint venture with Rowell Duffryn in Humberside.



Roy Douglas, left, and Peter Fitzpatrick, finance director, yesterday said they were focusing on buying in the Irish Republic

Britannic investors to share in £1bn bonanza

By MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

SHAREHOLDERS in Britannic Assurance will receive an 82 per cent dividend increase next month after the life insurer won approval to redistribute nearly £1 billion of surplus assets.

The insurer's 1.2 million policyholders will also share in a £209 million payout, worth an average £175 to each.

Shares surged 66.5p, to 870p, on the news. Shares in Prudential, which is also seeking to share out part of its estimated £5 billion surplus, fell 8.5p, to 564.5p, amid City fears that talks with the Department of Trade and Industry would be less successful.

Brian Shaw, Britannic's chief executive, said that he now expected double-digit div-

idend increases in future years. This progressive dividend policy would lift the total dividend for 1996 from 15.4p to 28p when the insurer reports its final-year figures on March 18, he said.

Surplus assets, known in the industry as orphan estate, are a sum of money in the life fund of an insurance company which is more than that needed to meet "the reasonable demand of policyholders".

In practice, this means a sum to cover the cost of paying annual bonuses plus adequate reserves for any lean years of stock market growth.

A number of insurers have already concluded talks with the DTI over their orphan estate and have paid out

policyholders and shareholders. They include Pearl Assurance, London & Manchester, Legal & General, United Friendly and Refuge Assurance (known after their merger as United Assurance).

Bonuses to Britannic policyholders will be added to the value of with-profits insurance or pension policies, and vary according to the length of time they have been held.

A maturing 15-year endowment policy with a premium of £5 collected every four weeks from the home will be allocated an additional £110 in bonus. A maturing 25-year endowment policy with a £20 premium will be allocated an extra £762 bonus.

Britannic has had its life

fund valued at £5.7 billion, of which £902 million has been attributed to shareholders.

Britannic said yesterday that it was writing to all with-profit policyholders and shareholders to inform them of the proposals, which include change in its Articles of Association. The plans will be set out in a special resolution to be put to the annual meeting on May 9.

Asked whether Britannic had been approached by other companies with a view to a merger or takeover, Mr Shaw said that Britannic was "an independent and financially viable company, and we intend to stay that way".

Tempos, page 28

Campaign on shares by Irish Permanent

FROM EILEEN MCCABE
IN DUBLIN

AN estimated 50,000 people who have not yet taken up their entitlement to more than 14 million shares in Irish Permanent, the Irish Republic's biggest mortgage lender, have been given until September to lodge their claims.

Announcing a 14.7 per cent rise in pre-tax profits, to 17c48.6 million, for 1996, Roy Douglas, chief executive, said that he believed that family issues and a climate of secrecy about money accounts might be responsible for the reluctance of so many people to come forward. The former building society, which floated more than two years ago, is to undertake an advertising campaign to inform potential claimants about the shares, which will be extinguished if unclaimed after September 21.

In its core market of residential mortgages in the Republic, Irish Permanent's new lending rose by 39 per cent, to 17c528 million, in 1996, lifting market share to more than 21 per cent. Commercial mortgages rose by 23 per cent, to 17c74 million. The car and small consumer loans sector had growth of 69 per cent in new business, to 17c108 million.

Overall net interest income grew by 10 per cent, to 17c101 million. Other income rose by 7.4 per cent, to 17c17.7 million.

Mr Douglas said that buying Capital Home Loans, the UK centralised mortgage lender, in October had left Irish Permanent well placed to gain from recovery in the UK mortgage market. The main focus for further acquisitions is in the Irish Republic and he reiterated Irish Permanent's interest in TSB, the state-controlled bank, if it is put on the market by the Irish Government.

Abbey National has a 9.9 per cent stake in Irish Permanent. The five-year protection period for newly floated companies in Ireland expires in just over two years.

Earnings were 17c39.4p a share, up from 17c34.2p, a final dividend of 17c25p, due on May 23, lifts the total by 16 per cent, to 17c125p.

Marriott to pay \$1bn for Renaissance

MARRIOTT International, the US hotels group, has agreed to acquire Renaissance Hotel Group, the Dutch company whose hotel brands include Ramada and New World, for \$1 billion. The companies will jointly have more than 1,300 hotels worldwide, across 150 brands. Marriott expects annual cost savings of between \$15 million and \$20 million to result from the merger. By late 1997, Marriott's worldwide lodging system is expected to exceed 300,000 hotel rooms.

Marriott hotels include Ritz-Carlton, Courtyard and Fairfield and the purchase will greatly expand its presence in the Asian market. Renaissance shareholders who own more than 54 per cent of the voting stock have agreed to the acquisition and will receive \$30 a share in cash. Marriott expects its earnings before interest charges, tax, depreciation and amortisation to rise by up to \$85 million in the 12 months after the acquisition.

St Modwen advances

SIGNS of recovery in the property sector were underlined yesterday when St Modwen, the property investment and development company, said that it had returned to growth. Its rental income rose by 39 per cent, to £11.4 million, in the year to November 30. Revenue almost doubled to £40.2 million, from £20.8 million. Pre-tax profits were £11.7 million (£10 million). Heavy spending on property took gearing to 97 per cent, from 57 per cent. Earnings per share were 6.8p (6.1p). A 17p final dividend, due on April 18, makes 2.5p (2.1p).

Building new jobs

THE building industry has put forward pre-election proposals for a new government which, it says, would create 150,000 jobs. Proposals from the Building Employers Confederation and the Major Contractors Group cover taxation, investment, training and the environment. Sir Martin Laing, BEC head and chairman of John Laing Construction, said the construction industry was "fundamental" to the British economy, reflecting economic confidence in the way that no other industry could.

Chambers network

IAN LANG, President of the Board of Trade, will today announce an approved network of 52 chambers of commerce to improve the local representation system for businesses. Approved chambers include those in Birmingham, London, Manchester, Leeds, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Bristol, Sheffield and Glasgow. David Richardson, president of the British Chambers of Commerce, said: "This new network responds to the needs of the modern company and gives them powerful representation at local, national and international levels."

Finelist in takeover

FINELIST, the distributor of automotive components, is acquiring First Line, a wholesale packager and distributor of spare parts, for a sum of £7.2 million. Finelist is paying an initial £2 million in cash and £2.7 million in shares with the balance related to future profits. First Line earned profits of £500,000 in the year to March 31. Chris Swan, the chairman of Finelist, said that First Line would benefit from an improved relationship with suppliers and increased investment as part of a large group.

CompuServe chief quits

ROBERT MASSEY has unexpectedly resigned as chief executive of CompuServe, the world's second biggest computer online service company, for "personal reasons". Mr Massey, 51, had held the post for only 18 months. CompuServe has struggled against America Online, its main competitor, and its share price has fallen 60 per cent since last April, when it was valued at \$30 a share in an initial public offering. Third-quarter results, due tomorrow, will follow a second-quarter loss of \$24.5 million.

European drive by Colt

COLT, the telecoms company that floated in December, said yesterday that it would expand its European business by constructing high-capacity networks for corporate customers this year in Munich, Frankfurt, Berlin and Paris. The 1997 capital expenditure programme is to double to almost £80 million. The company, formerly City of London Telecommunications, reported a loss of £11.2 million in the year to December 31, against a loss of £5.2 million in the previous year, on turnover that almost tripled to £35 million.

Chez Gerard grows

GROUPE CHEZ GERARD, the West End restaurant group, has bought Livebait, a fashionable fish restaurant at Waterloo, central London, for up to £1.6 million. The company, which already owns nine restaurants, said the acquisition would enhance earnings and complement its fish restaurants, Cafe Fish and Scotts. Livebait made a £62,000 profit on sales of £474,000 in its first year. Chez Gerard reported interim profits of £1.31 million (£1.35 million). The interim dividend rises 11 per cent, to 1p, due on May 13. Earnings per share were 5.1p (5.2p).

Setback for Macro 4

SHARES in Macro 4 fell 52.5p, to 422.5p, after the independent software company said that it suffered a 13.8 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £5.13 million, from £5.96 million, in the half year to December 31. The company attributed the decline to the pound's strength and said that full-year profits would also be adversely affected if there is no appreciable change in exchange rates. Earnings per share fell by 7.8 per cent, to 16.5p, but the dividend is rising by 4.3 per cent, to 9.7p. At constant exchange rates, profits would have been little changed at £5.9 million.

Options for boss of Birmingham City

By JASON NISSE

KARREN BRADY, the 27-year-old managing director of Birmingham City, has been given share options worth £375,000 as part of the first division football club's £25 million flotation on the Alternative Investment Market.

Ms Brady is receiving options over 750,000 shares at 50p each. She is also buying 10,000 shares in the float, while Trevor Francis, the team manager, is purchasing 40,000 and Steve Bruce, the club captain, 50,000.

Ms Brady said Mr Bruce received a £350,000 signing fee when he left Manchester United to join Birmingham

last summer. The float values the stake held by Sport Newspapers, the soft porn publisher run by David Sullivan, at £14.8 million. Sport took control of the group in 1993 and has invested £6.57 million.

Birmingham is raising £7.5 million, largely through a placing with institutions, but there will be an opportunity for private investors. The money will be used to invest in new players and on the ground at St Andrews.

In the year to August 1996 the club made operating profits, before transfer payments, of just £805,000 on turnover of £7.34 million.

Policy sellers regain 'feel-good' factor

By MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

AFTER two years of recession, the life and pensions industry has recovered the "feel-good" factor and has reported a 35 per cent rise in new policies. Sales in 1996 totalled £18.9 billion, the highest since 1993.

Sales of new life and pension policies in the fourth quarter of 1996 were up £5 billion, or 24 per cent. The figures show that the industry is emerging from the dark days of the pensions mis-selling scandal and the effects of greater disclosure. Mark Boleat, director-general of the Association of British Insurers, said: "The upturn in the sales of new life and pension

products, which became evident at the end of 1995, continued throughout 1996."

Premium income for new life insurance business, at £3.7 billion, rose by 28 per cent. New business premiums, at £3.3 billion, increased by 28 per cent, with annual premiums, at £400 million, rising by 20 per cent.

For individual pensions, premium income was £1.3 billion, a 17 per cent ahead. New annual premiums were £300 million, up 20 per cent, with single premiums, at £1 billion, rising 16 per cent.

Pennington, page 27

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Canada \$	2.291	2.181
Cyprus Cyp	0.851	0.786
Denmark Kr	11.02	10.22
Finland Mk	6.89	6.04
France Fr	9.85	9.00
Germany DM	2.39	2.06
Greece Dr	447	421
Hong Kong \$	13.14	12.14
Ireland P	1.02	1.00
Italy Lit	5.70	5.05
Japan Yen	2635	2680
Malta M	198.50	195.50
Netherlands Gld	0.556	0.503
New Zealand \$	3.255	2.955
Norway Kr	2.48	2.28
Portugal Esc	11.44	10.84
Spain Ptas	288.00	287.00
Switzerland Fr	7.70	6.90
Sweden Kr	242.00	238.00
Switzerland Fr	12.82	11.82
Turkey Lira	2.32	2.34
USA \$	20400	19000
USA \$	1.712	1.582

In accordance with the standard conditions relating to the payment of the undermentioned dividends declared on 17 January 1997, payments from the office of the United Kingdom Registrar will be made in United Kingdom currency at the rate of exchange of £7.1635 South African currency to £1 United Kingdom currency, this being the first available rate of exchange for remittances between the Republic of South Africa and the United Kingdom on 17 February 1997, as advised by the companies' South African bankers.

The United Kingdom currency equivalents of the dividends are therefore as follows:

Name of Company (All companies are incorporated in the Republic of South Africa)	Dividend No.	Amount per share (pence)
Gold Fields Property Company Limited	148	3.48991
New Wits Limited	92	2.37314
Vegetrisubit Metal Holdings Limited	100	3.48991

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Gold Fields Corporate Services Limited
Greenacre House
Francis Street
London SW1P 1DH

By order of the board:
per pro GOLD FIELDS CORPORATE SERVICES LIMITED
London Secretaries
S.J. Dunning
Secretary

18 February 1997

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 19 1997

□ Insurers' dilemma over health risks □ Hefty price for motorway services □ PR people put positive spin on departures

Barred from the genetic casino

□ WOULDNT it be nice to run a lottery that nobody ever won, a casino that never paid out where the roulette ball fell. Some fear that this no-win game is being invented by the big insurers.

You can be blacklisted if you live in an area where burglary or subsidence are common. You may have difficulty finding car insurance unless you have a safe garage in which you lock your vehicle every night. Make a claim on the car and just watch next year's premiums rocket.

Now there are worries that the principle of red-lining parts of the population is spreading to life insurance through the use of advanced genetic testing to work out which applicants are most likely to die from certain diseases, and then deny them higher premiums.

It is tempting to blame the greed of insurers, but, in reality, this is a hideously complex moral issue. First off, genetic predisposition to a disease is already widely used to select out applicants; tick the box that says both parents died early of heart disease and your premiums will reflect this. This is actuarial screening, not genetic, but the result is the same.

A number of insurers want a

genetic test from all applicants. Medical science will allow more and more diseases to be detected this way and screened out. The Association of British Insurers has come up with a compromise with little effect in the real world, which defers a final decision for two years at least.

Applicants will be required to report the results of all medical tests, as before, but in most cases genetic tests will not be used to decide whether cover can be offered. The assumption must be that, come 1999, the hawks among the insurers will make more headway and use of genetic evidence will be more common.

The danger is that people have genetic tests for the most respectable of reasons. As with Aids testing, this tends to happen before they have to think fully about their insurance needs. Strain out the positive tests, and you are penalising the responsible, or encouraging them to be irresponsible by ignoring any known danger.

The real moral dilemma is that

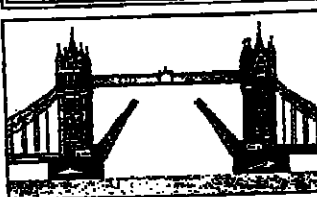
insurance covers a spectrum of risks, from voluntary ones, such as smoking, through grey issues, such as Aids, to risks that are entirely involuntary, those hidden genetic disorders. Some voluntary behaviour can reasonably be made more expensive to insure against.

If the doctors carry on, and they will, the insurance industry will one day have to take a moral stand and forbid refusal of cover for such involuntary medical risks. The difficulty will be maintaining that stance across the whole industry, and not allowing some firms to cherry-pick the healthiest customers.

Welcome break for Guthrie?

□ MOTORWAY services must be the ultimate non-discretionary purchase. No one stops at a Welcome Break for fun, you stop out of physical need or because the kids are becoming too fractious in the back. There is

PENNINGTON



little active consumer choice, either: no one drove 30 miles past a Welcome Break to get to a Granada, or vice versa.

So the policy so far has been to price as high as the trade will bear, keep investment low and leave the customers to look after themselves. It is at first hard to see what has persuaded Investcorp, the Bahrain-backed investment house, to pay well over the odds for 21 Welcome Breaks and promise another £50 million to do them up.

The price, plus that investment, represents about 12 times' historic profits before interest and tax. Investcorp has gran-

diose plans to create the world leader in motorway cafés, and even export this to places where the idea has yet to catch on.

Previous attempts to make motorway services more profitable have focused on increasing spend per head, persuading you to have that one more coffee while bribing the kids with Smarties and a cheap colouring book. Welcome Break's new owners have cleverly seen through to the fundamental drawback of this approach, that the places are so awful that no one willingly extends their stay.

They instead aim to raise productivity, so drivers are less likely to be put off by lengthy queues. They claim one advantage: the petrol price wars have reduced the premium motorway fuel used to enjoy, making a detour onto an A-road for a pit stop less of a saving and so attracting more potential customers to the cafés.

Investcorp's average period of investment is a little more than four years. Michael Guthrie, the

chairman, might at last get a stock market float out of this one, after a couple of false starts in Brightons and Pavilion.

Dynamic disarray

□ JUST listen to this. The changes will clarify the structure and give a sharper edge to our global offering for multinational clients. They really do talk like that, these public relations people. That was Colin Truster, big cheese at Shandwick, putting a positive spin on the departure of half his City team.

The last time this column said anything remotely disparaging about a City PR firm, someone came round to *The Times* almost immediately with a flip-chart. Fact. Still, here goes.

City PR companies, like amoebas and other equally low forms of life, reproduce by fission. So it is virtually impossible to shackle any employee to his or her desk, except by paying huge amounts

of money, generally far more than they are worth. They are even more fissionous than advertising agencies, because a campaign can be identified and judged, however subjectively. The "added value" the PR industry gives to its clients is rather more ill-defined — often little more than a personal relationship with the bosses at the company, which is why the account tends to move on the arrival of a new chairman.

The Shandwick executives leaving will take an unspecified number of accounts with them, and this will do an unspecified amount of damage to the business remaining. Such uncertainty should make the shares impossible to value, yet they still sell on 12 times this year's estimated earnings. Pretty silly, for a company that on the industry's past record might not be around in 12 years.

These are not good businesses for the stock market, yet one such, Citigate, is about to float. Citigate was unconcerned yesterday about the implications of the walk-out at Shandwick. What, nothing positive about "the abundance of new startups in the sector proving its dynamic potential"? Come, come — somebody isn't trying.

New drugs fuel growth at SmithKline Beecham

By ERIC REGULY

SmithKline Beecham (SB), Britain's second largest pharmaceuticals group, yesterday promised continued high growth as a multitude of new drug products gain momentum.

Jan Leschly, chief executive, said: "We believe that we can maintain our objective of double-digit earnings growth in 1997." The optimistic outlook helped to lift the shares 13p to 894p, putting them within striking distance of their 52-week high of 904p.

The company said, however, that pre-tax earnings this year could fall by as much as 5 per cent if sterling

remains at year-end levels. Earnings were reduced by £35 million, or 9 per cent, in the last quarter of 1996, when sterling rose sharply against the American and European currencies.

The fourth-quarter currency hit reduced earnings by 2 per cent in the full year. SB, unlike its rival Zeneca, does not hedge against currency movements.

In the year to December 31, SB reported pre-tax profits of £1.55 billion, up 14 per cent on sales of £7.93 billion, up 13 per cent. Excluding the effects of currency fluctuations, pre-tax profits rose 16 per cent to £1.57 billion. Earnings per share of

37.9p, up 12 per cent, were in line with City forecasts.

New drugs, defined as drugs introduced in the past five years, are driving SB's growth. Sales of such products last year were up 37 per cent to £1.54 billion, and margins were maintained at 24.8 per cent in spite of a 19 per cent rise in research and development spending to £703 million.

The star performer was Serovat/Paxil, the depression and panic disorder treatment that was introduced in 1992. Its sales were up by almost half to £706 million.

Five of the company's compounds entered Phase 3 trials — the final tests before com-

mercial production — in 1996. SB will not lose any drug patents until 2002.

Hugh Collum, chief financial officer, said "pricing was still under pressure" at the Clinical Laboratories division in the US. CL's sales were up 2 per cent to £840 million, but this was the result of volume instead of price increases. He denied speculation that CL would be put up for sale.

A fourth-quarter interim dividend of 5.85p, up 26 per cent, is to be paid on April 15, making the full-year dividend 17.85p, up 25 per cent.

Tempus, page 28

Management shake-up at Peptide

PEPTIDE Therapeutics, the vaccine development company that has partnership deals with Medeva and SmithKline Beecham, has unveiled senior management changes (Paul Durman writes).

John Brown, finance director, becomes chief executive, replacing Alan Goodman, who will become deputy chairman and be responsible for licensing deals in North America. Sir Brian Richards, 65 later this year, is giving up his executive role, although he will remain chairman.

Peptide spent £5 million on research and development last year. With negligible sales of £150,000, this produced a pre-tax loss of £4.6 million (£3.6 million loss).

Shandwick chiefs to set up PR rival

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SHANDWICK International, the public relations group, is losing one third of the directors of its City arm. They are quitting to set up a rival company (See Pennington, this page).

The news sparked speculation that some Shandwick clients may move their accounts, despite an agreement by the defectors not to work for current clients for at least 12 months.

Clients of directors who have left Shandwick include British Gas, Tarmac, Railtrack, Cookson, 3i and the Halifax. Lord Chadlington, chairman of Shandwick, is on the Halifax board and that, along with the flotation, makes it an unlikely candidate for switching. But Halifax said

yesterday that it intended to review its PR needs after the float. The contract with British Gas, which was to see it through its demerger, is also about to end.

The new consultancy, the Hogarth Partnership, will be launched on April 1. Chris Matthews, former chief executive of Shandwick Consultants, the City PR arm, will take on the same role at the new firm. Nick Denton, John Olsen and James Longfield will leave at the end of March while Rachel Hirst will stay until the Halifax flotation.

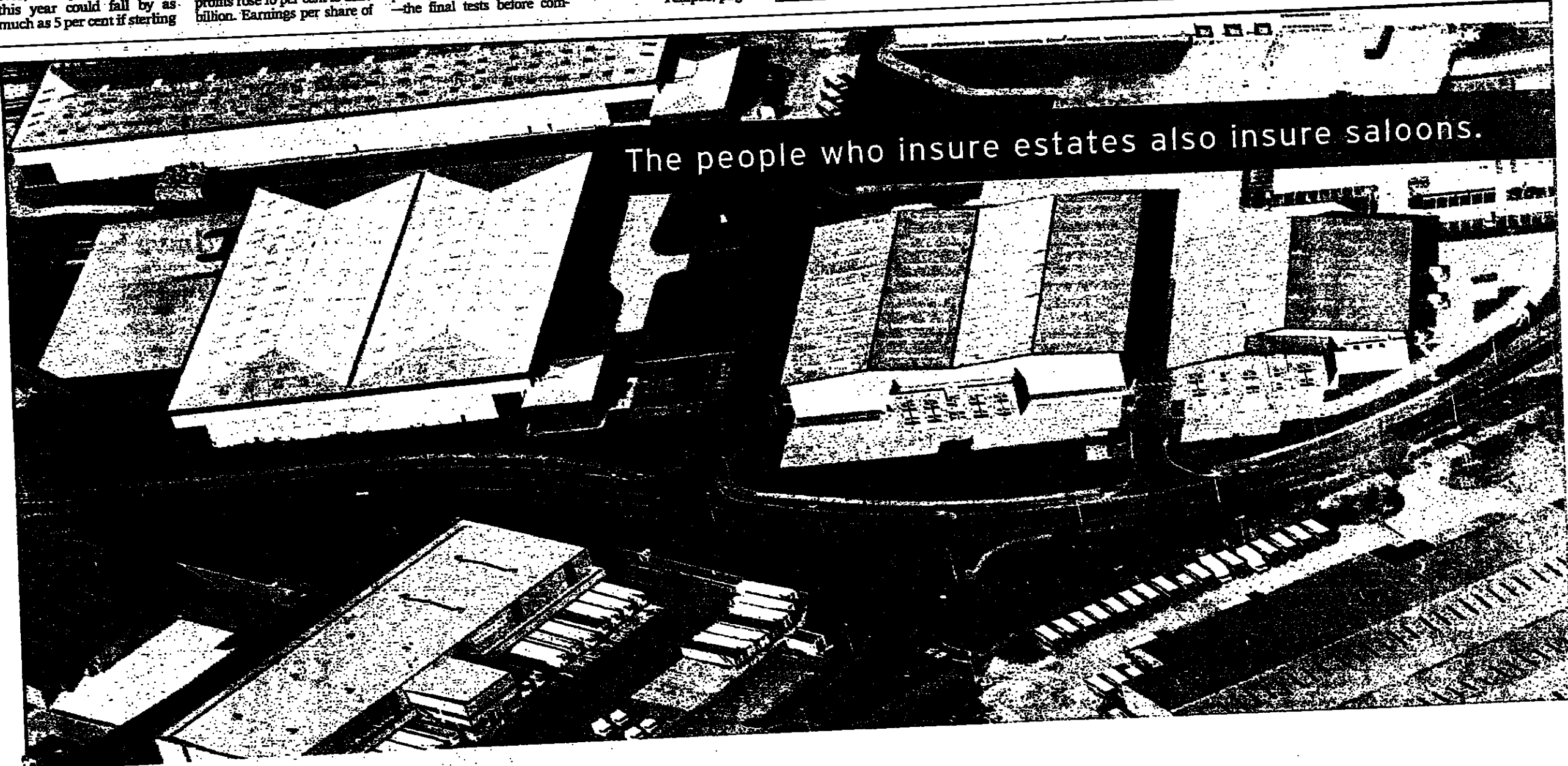
Shandwick Consultants is restructuring into three divisions and has appointed Colin Truster, managing director of Shandwick's UK operations, as temporary chief executive.

Sedgwick extends RTI stake

SEDGWICK GROUP, the insurance broker, is acquiring a further 50 per cent interest in River Thames Insurance from Transamerica Corporation for up to £14 million (Martin Barrow writes).

Sedgwick will then own 99 per cent of River Thames, which ceased underwriting new business in November 1996 and was put into orderly run-off with immediate effect.

Sedgwick's 1996 pre-tax profits rose 5 per cent to £95.5 million. Earnings eased to 11.6p a share from 12.6p, reflecting a lower tax rate in 1995. With a total dividend of 7.25p a share the underlying dividend for the year is unchanged at 6.5p.



The people who insure estates also insure saloons.



UAP PROVINCIAL

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From an industrial estate to a saloon car, UAP Provincial can insure them both. That's because as part of one of the world's largest insurance groups, we are the driving force behind a full range of policies that cover risks both large and small.

All this backed by the kind of expertise and financial strength that gives complete confidence. You'll also have the reassurance of knowing that when you work with us, you'll be working with experts who specialise in your particular field. No matter what your needs, talk to UAP Provincial, we'll have a policy that's right up your street.

مركزاً من لاصح

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Unilever tipped to take bite at United Biscuits

CITY speculators were running through the old takeover favourites yesterday in their search for possible targets for cash-rich Unilever. At the top of that list is United Biscuits, the McVitie, Crawfords and KP food group.

Last week, Unilever, 2p cheaper at £16.02½, said that it would use the proceeds from the sale of its chemical interests to make several sizeable acquisitions. Failing that, it will return the money to shareholders.

UB, 1p dearer at 233p, has risen sharply since the start of the year with a growing number of brokers confident that the long-awaited bid for the company will soon materialise. UB, which has had its fair share of problems in recent years, carries a price tag of £1.2 billion, well within the scope of Unilever, which weighs in at a stockmarket worth of £32.1 billion.

The rest of the equity market saw early gains frittered away after an uncertain start to trading in New York. Shares had followed gills higher first thing, cheered by the admission from Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, that there was a need for a rise in interest rates. The FT-SE 100 index closed 5.5 down at 4,332.3 on turnover of 894 million shares.

Centrica, demerged earlier this week from British Gas, continued to lose ground in heavy trading, sliding 1½p to 63½p. That stretches the loss during the past two days to 12p with a further 55 million shares changing hands. BG, which includes the exploration and pipeline side of the business, ended 1½p dearer at 176p.

Shares of Energy Group began trading at a premium on the grey market ahead of the completion next week of Hanson's three-stage demerger programme. Shares in Energy, made up of Eastern Group in Britain and Peabody in the US, started life at 530p and touched a peak of 543½p before settling just 3½p dearer at 533½p on turnover of almost one million shares.

NotWest Securities, the broker, says there is better value elsewhere and it prefers National Power, down 5½p to 501½p. Merrill Lynch complains there is little synergy within Energy.

There was a lukewarm reception for full-year figures from Barclays Bank showing



Jan Leschly of SmithKline Beecham, up 13p on higher profits

pre-tax profits 13 per cent higher. The final outcome was at the lower end of City forecasts, leaving the shares 70½p lower at £11.29 after their recent record-breaking run. Brokers said the fall might have been even greater had it not been for a 21 per cent rise in the final payout.

Lloyds TSB continued to make headway as the City

holders of 23p. The news left Prudential Corporation 8½p off at 564½p.

A 16 per cent increase in profits to £1.57 billion last year at SmithKline Beecham was given the thumbs-up with the shares rising 13p to 894½p. Most of the improvement stemmed from sales of new drugs. But Jan Leschly, chief executive, warned that the

group lost £5 million for every

cent against the dollar.

Clyde Petroleum hardened 2p to 118½p as Gulf Canada's £495 million offer went unconditional after receiving acceptances totalling 21.43 per cent.

This, combined with the near 30 per cent stake it owns, raises its total holding to 51.42 per cent.

Williams Holdings rose 6p

It may be time to take some profits at Boots the chemist after the

recent strong run by the shares which has carried them to their highest level. The price fell from a peak of 70½p yesterday to close 13p lower at 688p as UBS, the broker, struck the shares off its buy list. Almost four million shares were traded.

reflected on last week's encouraging trading news. It rose 9½p to 528p. But there were losses for National Westminster, down 3½p to 803½p, and Royal Bank of Scotland, 6½p cheaper at 616p.

Britannic leapt 66½p to a new high of 870p as the group confirmed that the value of its orphan estate would provide a dividend payment to share-

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MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 6981.26 (+7.73)
S&P Composite 807.21 (+1.77)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 18470.75 (+220.80)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 13302.94 (+1.68)

Amsterdam:
AEX Index 735.42 (+3.43)

Sydney:
ASX 2501.1 (+4.5)

Frankfurt:
DAX 3276.16 (+13.59)

Singapore:
Straits 2229.70 (+26.31)

Brussels:
Cac 40 11744.50 (+54.10)

Paris:
CAC 40 2617.52 (+16.98)

Zurich:
SIX Gen 938.50 (+4.63)

London:
FT 100 2843.3 (+2.5)
FT 250 4332.3 (-5.5)
FTSE Mid 250 4612.7 (+6.2)
FTSE 250 2139.3 (-1.8)
FTSE 100 2172.87 (+7.58)
FT All-Share 2111.26 (+1.31)
FT Non Financials 2152.63 (+0.92)
FT Financials 120.18 (+0.28)
FT Govt Secs 95.74 (+0.44)
Bulgaria 49/02
SEA Volume 884.5m
US\$ 1,601 (+0.0135)
German Mark 2,708 (+0.0008)
Exchange Index 96.8 (+1.2)
Bank of England official close 1.788
ECU 1.788
XPI 154.4 Jan (2.0%) Jan 1997-100
RPIX 153.9 Jan (3.1%) Jan 1997-100

RECENT ISSUES

CBS Publishing 175
Calcare Group 14
Centrica (75) 63
GB Railways 102
Infobank Int'l 144
John Lewis 118
Prelude 18
Prelude Warrants 118
Tea Plantations Int'l 102
Tea Plantations Wts 30
Technoplast 126
Zinc Mining 24

RIGHTS ISSUES

Finelst Gp n/p (320) 45

MAJOR CHANGES

RISKS:
Titan 1230 (+18p)
Britannic 870p (+66p)
Capital Corp 195p (+10p)
Agos 450p (+21p)
Smith WH 453p (+13p)
Vanguard 705p (+17p)
All Nippon Air 411p (+10p)
Antigast 415p (+10p)
Page (Michael) 495p (+10p)
Preston 557p (+11p)
Nat Aust Bk 61.3p (+1p)
Party 475p (+9p)
Lloyds TSB 528p (+9p)
Irish Perm 585p (+10p)
Kingsbury Gp 204p (+7.7p)

FALLS:
Shield Dig 338p (-25p)
Scots 650p (-29p)
Clyde Blowers 335p (-15p)
DCS Group 304p (-13p)
Telepac 242p (-10p)
Nat West 820p (-31p)
Blue Circle 815p (-15p)
Laird 370p (-11p)
Nail Express 540p (-14p)
Boots 888p (-13p)
Whitbread 781p (-13p)
Com Union 716p (-9p)
Boosey Hawks 802p (-10p)
GKN 922p (-11p)

Closing Prices Page 31

TEMPUS

Poor investment

IT is a mystery how investment banking has managed to escape the downsizing and cost-cutting that has swept through the financial services industry. Personal banking has become a lean business - chastened by the excesses of the Eighties. Barclays closed branches, invested in technology and sacked bank managers. The result is an operation more like a lending factory than a service business and the 35 per cent return on capital from personal lending is proof of its success.

In a sense, the big banks followed the example of manufacturing industry in the Eighties, shedding non-performing businesses and outdated working practices. But while retail bankers live in fear of head office efficiency measures, investment bankers thrive, demanding more money, more staff and more perks to produce less profit. No

time and motion expert monitors the behaviour of corporate financiers, or questions the success rate of the mergers and acquisitions team in securing mandates. Investment bankers do sometimes lose their jobs - at least some of the additional £45 million in staff costs incurred by BZW was down to redundancy packages. Yet Barclays is still determined to spend more on a business that is destroying shareholder value.

Money is being thrown at BZW in the hope that it can buy in talent. The strategy is ultimately futile as it demoralises existing staff. It also ignores the fact that investment banking profits are driven not by ingenuity but by market forces. The fastest returns come from deals that walk in the door, but BZW has suffered a downturn in a year of extraordinary corporate activity.

SmithKline

SMITHKLINE Beecham's results are the envy of the industry. New products are propelling sales forward, no more patents expire until 2002 and the company has leading positions in over-the-counter products and managed care. Gearing has plummeted while cashflow and interest cover move in the opposite direction. It all sounds too good to be true.

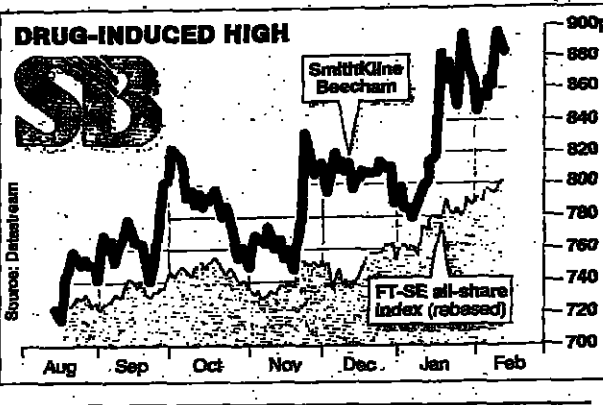
SmithKline still has troubles. It talks of a turnaround in its Clinical Laboratories division but the numbers tell only one story. Sales are up by only 2 per cent, due entirely to volume rather than price increases. The trading profit is up 7 per cent, mostly due to cost-cutting. Meanwhile, CL's main problem, its difficulty in getting reimbursed by government Medicare and

Medicaid programs, has not

been fully resolved. It is too early to tell whether CL is more liability than asset. Diversified Pharmaceuticals Service, the American managed care business, is expanding but not yet profitable. SmithKline is optimistic about DPS and its ability to replicate the service in other foreign markets, but

will not reveal the numbers.

Until it does, shareholders should be wary. SmithKline's great strength is its new products and the potential of products in clinical trials. This is likely to ensure double-digit growth for many years. In the short-term, however, the shares are unlikely to outperform the sector.



Britannic

THE success of Britannic in securing shareholder rights over surplus 'orphan' assets has cast a pall over similar efforts by the Prudential. The latter's shares took a tumble yesterday as Britannic announced an 82 per cent dividend increase for shareholders out of a £902 million surplus agreed with the DTI.

The problem for the Pru is that the DTI took a tough line, where profits were historically divided up 90 per cent to shareholders and 10 per cent to shareholders. In the past, Britannic's shareholders have not always taken their full 10 per cent management fee. Even so, the DTI has decided that this surplus, estimated to be £58 million, cannot be reclaimed by shareholders. Britannic has said it will only reopen discussions on this particular surplus 'in the event of any future clarification of industry practice'.

That clarification is likely

to come only if Prudential decides to challenge DTI policy. The Pru has every incentive because the bulk of its estimated £5 billion orphan surplus comes from funds structured under the same 90:10 proportions. However, it faces a difficult task because of an awkward precedent set by the Pearl, which failed to secure from the DTI as much as the new deal had hoped.

Clyde Pet

NOTWITHSTANDING the quixotic attempt by Clyde's Dutch partner, SHV Energy, to scupper the bid at the last minute, Gulf Canada has won its prize. SHV's motives are obscure but the company clearly felt that its relation-

ship with Clyde in the

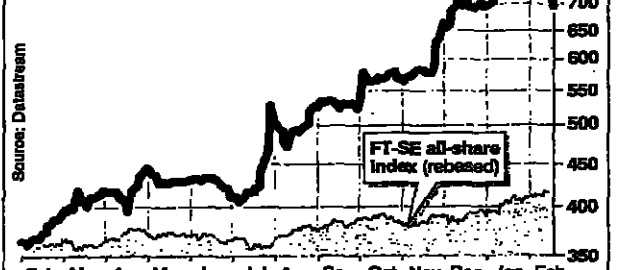
Netherlands was worth a £5 million bet. In hindsight, the prize will go to those investors who will cash in capital gains of 200 per cent over the space of 18 months.

In the circumstances, it is a credit to Clyde's management that so many investors chose to spurn the Gulf offer which was buoyed by a heated oil sector and frothy crude oil prices.

Those investors who chose to stick with management cannot have been unaware that the futures market is anticipating a rapid fall in the oil price from \$23 to \$18. Their concern may have been not that the bid was too low but that opportunities to reinvest cheaply in oil stocks are almost non-existent. The entire sector is trading on racy premiums to net asset value and many investors will be only too aware of the potential fall-out for oil shares had the Gulf bid failed.

EDITED BY CARL MORTSHED

STAGECOACH: THE TRAIN NOT APPROACHING PLATFORM ONE



COMMODITIES

ICE-LOR (London 6.00pm)
CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel FOB)

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Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

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PREMIUM LBS (London 6.00pm)

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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Frank in ring for new home

FRANK WARREN could be moving to a house near you. The boxing promoter disqualified from serving as a company director for seven years, in the face of allegations including trading while insolvent, has put his gaudy pile on the market for £950,000.

Dubbed "My Little Pony House" by locals, because of its turrets and luminous pink decor, this is where Warren recovered from a near fatal shooting. The Hertfordshire house, advertised in *Country Life* through Savills, boasts a swimming pool, gym, stables and three paddocks.



Warren seeking new residence

Dynamic duo

DAVID BUCHEN is to join NatWest Markets as head of global foreign exchange proprietary trading. Based in the US, his boss will be long-time buddy, Howard Kurz, managing director and head of global foreign exchange. The two met 15 years ago at the Bank of America, and Buchen went on to deliver a speech at Kurz's wedding. The duo will have to wait until the end of next week, however, to celebrate their reunion at Le Caprice.

MARTIN TAYLOR was in bullish form yesterday. Asked whether Barclays Bank was likely to join its competition, and jump into bed with a supermarket, the chief executive said: "We're not interested in forming a partnership with any other brand name. We think it might help them too much." Puh-lease.

Fast lane

A RECENT scene outside Warburgs brought memories of the Eighties flooding back. The arrival of three new Porsches forced traffic to an abrupt halt. However, senior salesman Paul Ferry was unable to pick up his Porsche. The poor chap was too busy seeking up the sun in Barbados.

Women only

AN invitation to meet the Governor of the Bank of Finland and the Finnish Minister for Employment and Social Affairs is strictly for women journalists only. The Governor and Minister, Sirikka Hamalainen and Liisa Jaakola, are women... and interviews will be taking place in a sauna.

Royal memory

CHRIS MATTHEWS will be remembered at Shandwick as the man who almost married Diana Princess of Wales. The three-day trip did not feature any areas normally found on tourist itineraries: Catford, Deptford, Woolwich, Stratford, Beckton and Park Royal replaced the Tower of London and the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace as the main attractions. What the association wanted to show its visitors was the progress of various urban regeneration schemes across the capital, where redundant warehouses, factories, railway lines and industrial sites were being converted to new uses to generate jobs, housing and transport links. The Greenwich millennium site and its vital new Jubilee Line and Docklands Light Railway links are just some of the most high profile schemes being developed by partnerships of public and private-sector interests.

The Times challenged Shandwick to a football match over the weekend. True to form, the City PR firm turned up four players short. And the outcome? Three goals to two for The Times.

MORAG PRESTON

Talking telephone numbers to put your letters on the line

Nifty operators

are hoping to make a fortune

by selling on figures, says

Tom Maddocks

Back in the Fifties, genteel ladies would telephone each other from exchanges called MAYfair or ABBey, while famous numbers, such as Whitehall 1212 for Scotland Yard, were much easier to remember than the ever-lengthening strings of digits we have to cope with today.

All that changed with the arrival of Subscriber Trunk Dialling (STD) calls in the Sixties, and the growth in telephone usage that meant the need to use number combinations with no sensible alphabetical equivalents. New phones were fitted with numbers only, and the letters gradually disappeared from use.

Now, however, they are making a comeback: you will find them on most new phones being sold. A number of young men believe this simple fact will make them very rich indeed.

The idea is to follow a well-tried business practice in the United States, where exhortations to "dial 1-800 PIZZA" or "1-800 FLOWERS" are common. The biggest player in the market is the Personal Number Company, which floated on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM) in September, with a market capitalisation of £10.23 million. It markets numbers beginning with the digits 07000, acting as a service provider for Vodafone, to whom the series has been allocated by Ofel.

PNC's initial sales pitch focused on personal numbers staying with an individual for life. They can be switched through from home to office to mobile at will. For this privilege, callers have to pay a higher charge rate, 14p a minute in peak times, 8p a minute in off-peak.

However, the focus has recently switched to selling number combinations whose alphabetic equivalents spell particular words. "The issue is not whether these numbers have a value," Jeremy Thomas, PNC's founder and chief executive, maintains, "but of how much people will pay once the idea takes off."

Mr Thomas has already made one fortune from the communications business, founding the Carphone mobile phone group and subsequently selling his stake to Cable and Wireless in 1988. Clearly he now believes another tidy profit is in prospect, although Personal Number Company shares have dipped from 66p at flotation to a recent 52p after a cautious interim statement. They had touched 103p in extremely thin volume.

Sales have been modest until now, with 15,000 subscribers connected by PNC since January 1996. However, interest looks set to explode if Britain follows America, where telephones with letters as well as numbers are once again becoming widely used.



Jeremy Thomas, the founder of PNC, is number one in the market

The market is now being kick-started by the entry of speculators, buying up letter combinations they believe they will be able to sell on later at a huge profit. PNC and its 250 dealers are selling most six-letter combinations for between £120 and £250, with a higher rate for specially attractive combinations such as 07000 ONLINE. On top, there is a monthly service charge of £6. Speculators are now asking £5,000 for 07000 STARTREK and £2,000 for 07000 SEXIER. Combinations such as SALLY or STEVE with the first letter of your surname can be had for a more modest £295 while they last. Words with more than six letters can be allocated; rather disconcertingly though, you are connected before you have finished dialling.

A typical speculator is Adrian Berry, 33, a computer consultant from Berkshire. He has bought 65 num-

bers, which so far he has hung on to despite some tempting offers. They include 07000 MIDLAND, NATWEST, DIGITAL and ATANDT, all of which he hopes will eventually go for large sums to the companies concerned.

"I was lucky and got in early before they did," he says, "but it is very hard to get in now, as all the big names and obvious combinations have been taken. There are lots of people up and down the country brainstorming, and trying out different numbers to see if they have already been taken. Many of my lines ring several times a day."

Mr Berry says he has received several serious offers at around the £10,000 level, but is hanging on in the hope that prices will escalate as companies recognise the numbers' commercial value, and in some cases the potential for embarrassment if they fall into the hands of rivals. "I was approached for 07000 AMTRAK today for instance. But in a year the going rate may be more like £100,000."

Nimble companies, such as Virgin, managed to reserve their own alphanumeric combinations before others thought of trying to cash in. Few are yet marketing to the public this way, although the idea is catching on at the ritzier end of the motor trade. 07000 PORSCHE and VOLVO are both in use. A west London travel firm is using 07000 SAFARI.

Direct Line, the telephone-based insurance group, has reserved 07000 DIRECT for future use. The company was unable to confirm rumours doing the rounds among dealers this week that a rival direct insurer has already unsuccessfully offered to buy it for £100,000.

Prices do seem to be steadily moving higher, though. This week, Alistair Reynette-James, a west London James Bond fan, hit the headlines by selling 07000 007 007 to a private detective agency for £50,000.

Darlington-based Liam Green and his partner, Norman Kennedy, trading as 21st Century Communications, have upped the ante considerably by putting the number 07000 MILLENNIUM, which they had reserved early last year, on sale with a £1 million price tag.

This figure caused hollow laughter among others in the industry, but the pair believe they may already have a buyer. "Someone has phoned from The Netherlands saying he represents an international company which may offer the asking price," Mr Green says. "We are waiting to see if they follow it up."

These numbers, though, may not be quite the unique asset their proud owners believe. BT, for instance, has recently launched its own personal number series beginning with 07171. "There are other codes starting with 07 which can be used with letter combinations," says Mr Thomas, "but we believe we have a big advantage by getting in first with 07000, the most memorable code."

What is hard to discern among all the froth and excitement is just how many serious buyers there are for these series, as opposed to speculators selling on to each other in the hope of fabulous profits that may never materialise.



ANTHONY HARRIS

Weighing the 'weightless' economy

What has Yasuo Hamanaka in common with the Governor of the Bank of England? Simply that both have confessed publicly that they were wrong about prices. It is true that Hamanaka's error over copper prices has cost his employers, Sumitomo, some \$2.6 billion, and cast a cloud over the London Metal Exchange. The Governor's forecasts for average inflation would lead to faster inflation, led by commodity prices, but the experience of the 1990s suggests that this law may have been repealed. So what, you may ask, is new? It is more than a year since Roger Bootle of HSBC published a whole book about the end inflation, and the financial markets are slowly adjusting to a world of more or less stable prices. However, it is one thing to notice that we are off trend, and quite another to suggest that the change may be permanent.

It is only recently that Alan Greenspan has made it respectable at least to play with such an idea, and only now that the Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin has produced a catchphrase for the rest of us to latch on to: the weightless economy.

What the Bulletin means is that economic activity is increasingly taking forms which are virtually impossible to measure. You can weigh widgets or cakes, and construct a price index — though this is probably misleading, as Greenspan argues, because it takes no account of improved quality. You can count hairs on transport services even though they have no material content, and estimate output and productivity. But what of goods which exist only in the minds of the buyers? (Consultancy services are one example, the use of the Internet a trendier one.)

Such things account for a significant part of what we call economic growth; and that is a horse of a different colour. We are talking fundamental change. The miners of Chile and Zaire noticed this trend years before it caught the eye of the more wide-awake central bankers. All through the 1980s the prices of industrial raw materials fell further and further behind expectations, as they failed to respond to booming output. This change was the undoing of all who relied on history to repeat itself: nearly all the banks in Texas, the International Tin Council, and now, nearly, Sumitomo. The Conference Board, a US industrial think-tank, recently surmised that this is the main reason for the end of inflation, always led in the past by raw costs. Maybe it takes time to be sure of an historic tide.

Meanwhile, the central banks face another problem: not only can they not be sure what future prices trends are likely to be, they cannot really be sure of anything. Consider a economic model is built by applying higher mathematics to small marginal changes in output, prices and efficiency. As economic visibility gets poorer, however, these marginal measurements get more and more imprecise, until the whole model looks more and more like a medieval map, distorted in shape and full of *terra incognita*. What is most galling, perhaps, is that technological change is not only making it harder and harder to measure output, but harder and harder to measure money.

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So how do you make monetary policy. The real world answer is guesswork. This answer has proved acceptable in the US, where Alan Greenspan has built such a reputation for judgment that even when he proclaims his ignorance, they will take his word for anything. It is becoming acceptable in London, where markets have been finding, against their instincts, that Kenneth Clarke's hunches are worth more than the Bank's model.

Across the Channel, the Bundesbank has built its reputation on rigid enforcement of some law or other. Dare it now confess the truth?

BUSINESS LETTERS

Expressing a view on travel costs

From Mr Barry S. Doe
Sir, I note that Kevin Bennett, marketing director of National Express, wishes the public to know that the coach is the cheapest way to travel from London to Edinburgh (Business Letters, February 5). We must assume that he would similarly like the public to know that the coach is the cheapest way to travel from London to Leicester, Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield. The problem is that National Express owns the rail franchise on the latter route. What does Mr Bennett wish his staff at those stations to advise potential travellers?

This again demonstrates the extraordinary attitude of the Government towards railways: we are told it would open up the system to competition, and then franchises are awarded to the railway's chief (public transport) competitor. Can Mr Bennett's wish be other than to protect his national coach market at the expense of a mere rail route and how can this be in the public interest?
Yours faithfully,
BARRY S. DOE,
25 Newmorton Road,
Moorlowdown,
Bournemouth,
Dorset.

Woolwich perks not worth the candle

From Mrs Norma Teakle
Sir, it's not fair! "Henry the Cat" and all his friends and everyone at Woolwich for Kids have sent my daughter, Caroline, a birthday card (and have done for 12 years). They haven't ever sent me one and as far as the Woolwich is concerned, as First Named Person on her Woolwich for Kids account it's me (not her) that's eligible for shares in the forthcoming transfer of the Woolwich Building Society. So I should get the birthday card and not Caroline. Unfortun-

nately, because I have more than one account with the Woolwich I shall only be entitled to one Additional Variable Distribution. Point of interest, when I opened accounts for both my children no one asked me if I wanted them in their names only and it was the Woolwich who put my name first. Please let John Stewart (chief executive of the WBS) know that my birthday is August 4.
Yours faithfully,
NORMA TEAKLE,
Yew Tree House,
Wedmore,
Somerset.

Millennium focuses attention on constructing a vision for London

Sara McConnell looks at a study aimed at improving the capital's world city status

There's nothing to see but contaminated mud," confessed the Greenwich Council official as the coachful of European urban planning specialists drew up by the barbed wire fence separating the future millennium exhibition site from the access road. Behind the fence, huge excavators were churning up heaps of earth. Between two derelict buildings on the other side of the road, Canary Wharf rose in the distance.

The millennium site, which has just survived a bruising political battle over funding for clearing the former British Gas land and building the proposed exhibition dome, was part of a whistlestop tour of London arranged by the Association of London Government for invited urban experts from Berlin, Barcelona and Glasgow.

The three-day trip did not feature any areas normally found on tourist itineraries: Catford, Deptford, Woolwich, Stratford, Beckton and Park Royal replaced the Tower of London and the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace as the main attractions. What the association wanted to show its visitors was the progress of various urban regeneration schemes across the capital, where redundant warehouses, factories, railway lines and industrial sites were being converted to new uses to generate jobs, housing and transport links. The Greenwich millennium site and its vital new Jubilee Line and Docklands Light Railway links are just some of the most high profile schemes being developed by partnerships of public and private-sector interests.

The visit was the prelude to

what the association claims is the largest urban development research project to be carried out in any city. The 18-month-long London Study has been partly funded by the European Commission, which has contributed £100,000 of the total £300,000 cost. The Corporation of London has contributed £30,000. The aim is to develop a "vision of London" as a liveable and workable city. More widely, the research findings on London will be used as a European model for regenerating cities.

The research will be taking place against a backdrop of intense debate over the future of London in the run-up to the

general election. Conservative plans for privatising the Underground have provoked more heated arguments over the need for more investment in the capital's ageing infrastructure. High unemployment, poor housing and crime in some parts of the capital are a widely recognised problem.

The association, which represents London's 32 boroughs and the City Corporation, is the nearest thing to London government under the current system. It is setting up a steering committee to co-ordinate the London Study. The Confederation of British Industry and London First, the private-sector campaign group, will take their

places on the committee alongside representatives from the boroughs, central government, the voluntary sector, training and enterprise councils and an observer from the European Commission.

The private sector and business representatives say they are keen to be involved in the study. But they are also warning no time making clear their concerns about the perceived shortcomings of London's physical and governmental structure and the potentially detrimental effect these could have on London's status as a world city. London First argues: "London produces 19 per cent of the UK's gross national

product and makes a net contribution to the UK economy. It is seen overseas as a wealth generator. Londoners put in more than they get out. But try telling that to someone on a bleak council estate in Middlesbrough." This week London First launched a campaign for more investment in London's Underground system, determined to make this an electoral issue.

Both the CBI and London First argue for better co-ordination of transport planning and development of capital projects, although they are cautious about the prospect of an elected mayor or a GLC Mark II.

The planners now have until next month to produce reports on possible ways forward for the capital. These will be discussed at a symposium next month at which the London Study will be officially launched.

Those involved with the study hope its backing from Europe and its wide range of participants will generate valuable information and at least ensure it a hearing. Archie Galloway, deputy chairman of policy and resources at the Corporation of London, said: "What will be produced will be a better understanding of how things tick in London." He added: "If we produce a sufficiently robust report, we hope the Government of the day will look at it."

But all those involved in the study are aware that the results of their work could end up gathering dust unless the Government of the day has the political will and, more importantly, the money to implement the study's recommendations.



The Greenwich millennium scheme is among those involving the public and private sectors



مركز امان لاصح

Equities lower in thin trading

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
Alco	120.00	-0.8	12.0
Alco	120.00	-0.8	12.0
Alco	120.00	-0.8	12.0
Alco	120.00	-0.8	12.0
Alco	120.00	-0.8	12.0

BANKS

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
Bank	100.00	-0.5	10.0
Bank	100.00	-0.5	10.0
Bank	100.00	-0.5	10.0
Bank	100.00	-0.5	10.0
Bank	100.00	-0.5	10.0

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
Brew	150.00	-1.0	15.0
Brew	150.00	-1.0	15.0
Brew	150.00	-1.0	15.0
Brew	150.00	-1.0	15.0
Brew	150.00	-1.0	15.0

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
Build	80.00	-0.2	8.0
Build	80.00	-0.2	8.0
Build	80.00	-0.2	8.0
Build	80.00	-0.2	8.0
Build	80.00	-0.2	8.0

BUILDING MATERIALS

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
Build	60.00	-0.1	6.0
Build	60.00	-0.1	6.0
Build	60.00	-0.1	6.0
Build	60.00	-0.1	6.0
Build	60.00	-0.1	6.0

CHEMICALS

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
Chem	90.00	-0.3	9.0
Chem	90.00	-0.3	9.0
Chem	90.00	-0.3	9.0
Chem	90.00	-0.3	9.0
Chem	90.00	-0.3	9.0

DISTRIBUTORS

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
Distr	70.00	-0.4	7.0
Distr	70.00	-0.4	7.0
Distr	70.00	-0.4	7.0
Distr	70.00	-0.4	7.0
Distr	70.00	-0.4	7.0

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
Engin	110.00	-0.6	11.0
Engin	110.00	-0.6	11.0
Engin	110.00	-0.6	11.0
Engin	110.00	-0.6	11.0
Engin	110.00	-0.6	11.0

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
Food	130.00	-0.7	13.0
Food	130.00	-0.7	13.0
Food	130.00	-0.7	13.0
Food	130.00	-0.7	13.0
Food	130.00	-0.7	13.0

HEALTHCARE

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
Healt	140.00	-0.9	14.0
Healt	140.00	-0.9	14.0
Healt	140.00	-0.9	14.0
Healt	140.00	-0.9	14.0
Healt	140.00	-0.9	14.0

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
House	100.00	-0.5	10.0
House	100.00	-0.5	10.0
House	100.00	-0.5	10.0
House	100.00	-0.5	10.0
House	100.00	-0.5	10.0

INSURANCE

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
Insur	120.00	-0.8	12.0
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INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
Invest	110.00	-0.6	11.0
Invest	110.00	-0.6	11.0
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House	100.00	-0.5	10.0
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HEALTHCARE

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
Healt	140.00	-0.9	14.0
Healt	140.00	-0.9	14.0
Healt	140.00	-0.9	14.0
Healt	140.00	-0.9	14.0
Healt	140.00	-0.9	14.0

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
House	100.00	-0.5	10.0
House	100.00	-0.5	10.0
House	100.00	-0.5	10.0
House	100.00	-0.5	10.0
House	100.00	-0.5	10.0

INSURANCE

Company	Price	%
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Tel: 0171 680 6806

La Crème de la Crème

Fax: 0171 782 7586

First Point International is a rapidly expanding international relocation organisation, assisting individuals with all aspects of living and working abroad. We require the following exceptional team players to join our dynamic company committed to excellence.

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A proactive highly organised individual looking for a career move to go beyond retail/secretarial/personal assistant experience already gained. Excellent communication skills and initiative are essential for liaison with our clients in all aspects of our services.

INTERNATIONAL PLACEMENT CONSULTANT

An enthusiastic, experienced sales person keen to work in an international environment, securing employment in varied fields for our clients. Must be resourceful, organised, have a positive attitude and be able to achieve results.

SECRETARY/GENERAL SUPPORT ROLE

A team player with good audio skills, who is able to work under pressure to meet the demands of a busy, expanding department. These are two opportunities to immediately accept responsibility within an exciting and positive environment that also provides excellent future prospects.

Please send, or fax, your Curriculum Vitae stating your current salary to:

Christine Lal
First Point International
York House, 17 Great Cumberland Place
London, W1B 7LA. Fax: 0171 784 7997
No Agencies Please



Office for Public Management

3 PA/Team Administrators Salary: c. £16,000

The Office for Public Management is a development agency working with managers across the health service, local and central government, education services and other public services. Due to internal promotions, we need to fill 3 PA/Team Administrator posts.

We are looking for people who are highly organised, able to work to tight deadlines, who have good interpersonal skills and the skills and abilities to support the work of up to six very busy people. All the usual secretarial skills are required. We use WordPerfect for Windows, have occasional dictaphone usage, and use PowerPoint for presentations. Previous experience of working in the public services is not essential, but a commitment to our work is.

Please apply by sending a CV and a full covering letter to: Helen Sharkey, Practice Manager, Office for Public Management, 2525 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8BT. Closing date for receipt of applications: 28th February 1997. The Office is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

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Int'l co. in Scotland's real partners sec. If you possess good sec skills and excel at speedwriting/typing, we have a great offer. Social co. and working conditions £17,250 Ref A04361

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-£16,500 + BENS
Lrg Co. in Mayfair, City & worldwide. Extl prospects to those with good sec skills. His 9.30-5.30, F&T, pension. Ref A01479
Please call Aklie 0171 377 6222

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We are an expanding Property Investment Company looking for a Secretary with fast accurate typing skills, W4W Windows OS. You should be flexible and willing to work as a member of a small team. Preferably you will have a property or legal background.
Attractive Salary for the right candidate.
Please Reply to Box No 3329

Design Studio Administrator

An increasingly successful design studio producing corporate and brand identity work in London W1 is looking for a Design Studio Administrator.
The post is to assist and be able to ensure an efficient workflow within the studio by handling all administration including client correspondence, handling client accounts and ensuring client meetings.

If you are looking for a job to make your own and have at least five years general administration experience, then we have a great opportunity for you. The studio is based in Mayfair, London W1. The studio is a small team, but a member of a small team. Preferably you will have a property or legal background.
Attractive Salary for the right candidate.
Please Reply to Box No 3329

PA TO CONSULTANT

We are a dynamic executive search firm specialising in the high technology sector, based in Wiltshire. We are looking for a PA to support our Consultant. The post is to assist and be able to ensure an efficient workflow within the studio by handling all administration including client correspondence, handling client accounts and ensuring client meetings.

Please send CV with hand-written covering letter to: Fintona Stock (Headhunter), Carrington House, 1 The Vile, London SW3 4AH.

SCHOOL SECRETARY

Full-time experienced Secretary required for small, very busy independent London Day School. Applications are invited for this post requiring excellent communication, organisational and personal skills. Windows experience essential. Hours 9.00am-5.00pm. Excellent salary plus generous benefits.
Please send CV with hand-written covering letter to: Fintona Stock (Headhunter), Carrington House, 1 The Vile, London SW3 4AH.

ARCHITECT'S PA

Highly organised individual required for architectural practice. Must be experienced in all aspects of the job. Excellent salary plus generous benefits.
CV to: John Smith, Studio 8, 10 Stanning Lane, London EC1A 4BB or fax to 0171 251 8322.

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To run office for MD of successful, established co. Sec. exp. accurate W4W, exp. & initiative. User with clients as part of friendly team. Exc. Salary neg.
Apply with CV to: J.Lee, TSC, 1 Southwark Street, WC2R 0LR.

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You will be responsible for many aspects of important administration in our busy Human Resources Department. You will be reporting directly to the Human Resources Manager but (94) demanding role involves dealing with employees at all levels - from new starters to senior management - so your communication skills will be important.

Finance Secretary

Reporting to the Financial Planning and Analysis Director and having involvement with the team, your previous experience in a commercial financial environment will be invaluable. Shortlisted will also be a distinct advantage.

Normally, excellent secretarial skills and computer literacy are pre-requisites for both roles. We need individuals who can work on their own initiative even when under pressure, and deliver first class secretarial support consistently. Both these positions are based at our International Head Office in London. In return for your skills, we offer a highly competitive salary and benefits package plus varied interesting work in a stimulating atmosphere. If you feel you match our requirements and you are ready for a fresh challenge, please apply in writing enclosing a current CV and salary details to:

Georgia Adams, Laura Ashley Limited,
27 Roper's Lane, Fulham, SW3 2AR.
Closing date is 26 March 1997.

No Agencies



Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School

(University of London)
Personal Assistant/Secretary to Dean

Lively, efficient and effective Personal Assistant/Secretary required for new Dean of Medical School, who will also have a role in coordinating undergraduate clinical education in the enlarged Imperial College of Medicine, including St Mary's Hospital Medical School. Good typing/shorthand and wordprocessor skills (Word Perfect Office). Based at Charing Cross Hospital, Fulham.

Salary within range £16,303 to £21,714 per annum inclusive of London Allowance, according to age and experience. Further details and application form obtainable from the Director of Personnel, Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School, The Reynolds Building, St Dunstan's Road, London W6 8RP. Tel: 0181-846-7827, to be submitted by 6 March 1997.

(Quote Ref: 97/19)
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Ferrari UK

Maranello Concessionaires Ltd

Our Sales and Marketing Manager needs a professional, organised and experienced (5 years minimum) secretary/PA to join his small young and dynamic team. You'll need shorthand, strong word processing skills, an ability to handle/organise a wide range of activities with confidence and, on occasion, be able to act independently as office manager. Smart appearance and an excellent telephone manner essential. Salary & pension commensurate with age and experience.

Please apply in writing only to:
Sue Oliver,
Ferrari UK, Thorpe Industrial Estate,
Egham, Surrey TW20 8RJ.
Fax: 01784 436303

EXECUTIVE SALES PA

Circs £15,000-18,000 pa
You will have proven administration and organisational skills, be an excellent communications person, have a keen eye for detail, computer literacy, and have the ability to work on your own initiative.

You will be working for an Executive Assistant at the Mayfair branch of Alamy Ltd and be expected to manage.

Are you up to the challenge?
We are looking for an exceptional person. Profit related pay can be introduced after an initial period. Experience in financial services or a sales environment an advantage.

For your CV with a hand-written covering letter to: William Ashby at 0171 238 7748 or post to: William Ashby at 0171 238 7748, 94 Baker Street, W1M 0NL.

PROPERTY PA/SECRETARY

CHELSEA
(£17,000-£18,000 + 5 weeks holiday)

We require an experienced, well organised and efficient PA to work with 2 busy Management Surveys in our small but expanding property investment company. Fast, accurate audio typing, good telephone manner and a sense of humour are essential.

In the first instance please send your CV, marked private and confidential, to: Sophie Ingemelt, CEM Ltd, Plaza 535, Kings Road, London SW10 0SZ.

P.A. SECRETARY - KNIGHTSBRIDGE

Bright, enthusiastic secretary required to provide support to Group Financial Director and Accountant.

Excellent communication and organisational skills. Accurate, fast typist - Word 4 Windows and audio preferred. Ability to work on own initiative.

Salary circa £18k plus benefits.
Please Reply to Box No 3374

BORIS SECRETARIES

Central London estate agent, requires a highly organised and efficient PA/Secretary to assist the Managing Director. The post is to assist and be able to ensure an efficient workflow within the studio by handling all administration including client correspondence, handling client accounts and ensuring client meetings.

Salary circa £18k - £20k depending on ability.
Tel 0171 373 8823

HANNO OF SWITZERLAND

PA/Office Administrator
We are expanding and need help!

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0171 245 8231.

PA TO DIRECTORS

Responsible for overseeing all aspects of the secretarial work of the UK Head Office and to act as a Personal Assistant to the Directors. Must have a minimum 5 years experience in a similar role. Salary £18,000 - £20,000. Simply Travel, 100, Old Street, London EC1A 1SD.

The Imperial Cancer Research Fund is one of Britain's largest charities. Our aim is to prevent, treat or cure all forms of cancer.

SECRETARY/ADMINISTRATOR

LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, LONDON WC2

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The Imperial Cancer Research Fund requires an experienced and enthusiastic Secretary/Administrator for its busy Clinical Research Directorate office.

The successful applicant will combine the roles of Secretary to the Assistant Director (Administration) with a variety of administrative duties. Well developed PC skills (Word 6) and a working knowledge of spreadsheets (Excel) is essential. Previous experience of a scientific/healthcare environment would be an advantage but is not essential.

You should have excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, good organisational skills and have the ability to work as part of a team and on your own initiative, to meet the requirements for this busy and demanding position. To apply: please send two copies of your full CV and a covering letter, including the names and addresses of two referees to: The Personnel Department, Imperial Cancer Research Fund, PO Box 123, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3PX, quoting ref: 1291/7. Closing date for applications is 5 March 1997.

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With at least 3 years' PA experience at Board level, you have excellent communication and interpersonal skills. You are motivated, logical and 100% reliable. Your analytical work habits guarantee good organisation; fast accurate word processing; and an up-to-date working knowledge of PC systems, including MS-Office, PowerPoint and Word. Fast, accurate shorthand is essential. Adapting to variable pressures and deadlines, you creatively seek sensitive solutions to problems as they arise. Educated to A level, you have a professional secretarial certificate and PC training.

To apply, please write with full career and salary details, to: Caroline Gorton, IPC Magazines, Room 1812, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS. Closing date for applications: 28 February 1997. No agencies please.

SECRETARY/PA TO CHAIRMAN

London WC1

£20,000 pa + travel benefits

For the Chairman of a leading, independently owned, business travel agency. Immaculate typing skills and shorthand essential. Sound knowledge of Microsoft Office including Word, PowerPoint and Excel. Familiarity with Access databases would be advantageous. Able to work under pressure at times without losing your 'cool'. This is a real opportunity for a well educated, intelligent person with initiative, ideally in the 25-35 age range, to join a youthful, 'pacey' environment in high quality offices. Starting salary negotiable, as indicated with attractive travel concessions.

Please write, in the first instance, with full details of work history and contact phone number to: Bull Thompson International Ltd., 8 Upper St Martin's Lane, London WC2H 9DF quoting reference No 2419 on your envelope, or fax to 0171 836 9812.

CHAIRMAN'S PA

A professional, well organised and experienced PA who can anticipate chairman's needs and ensure a smooth running of his business. The post is to assist and be able to ensure an efficient workflow within the studio by handling all administration including client correspondence, handling client accounts and ensuring client meetings.

You will be working for an Executive Assistant at the Mayfair branch of Alamy Ltd and be expected to manage.

Are you up to the challenge?
We are looking for an exceptional person. Profit related pay can be introduced after an initial period. Experience in financial services or a sales environment an advantage.

For your CV with a hand-written covering letter to: William Ashby at 0171 238 7748 or post to: William Ashby at 0171 238 7748, 94 Baker Street, W1M 0NL.

SECRETARY/OFFICE MANAGER

c. £18,000
An exciting opportunity exists in a confident, growing, intelligent, secretary to help run the office of a small, successful property company located in Fulham Road, Chelsea. Requires thorough knowledge of WPS 5.1 & DTP, preferably Publisher. Good working conditions & prospects for development. Some of the duties include:

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£17,500 p.a. + Bonus
Oxford Circus

A small multi-national company seeks a confident, efficient and a Property Secretary to assist the Managing Director. The post is to assist and be able to ensure an efficient workflow within the studio by handling all administration including client correspondence, handling client accounts and ensuring client meetings.

Salary circa £18k plus benefits.
Please Reply to Box No 3374

PA to Doctor

Highly organised and efficient PA to assist a busy General Practitioner. The post is to assist and be able to ensure an efficient workflow within the studio by handling all administration including client correspondence, handling client accounts and ensuring client meetings.

Salary circa £18k - £20k depending on ability.
Tel 0171 373 8823

PA TO MANAGING DIRECTOR

Based in West End office of a private property company you will assist the Managing Director. Your duties will include office management, typing of correspondence, preparation of reports, diary & travel arrangements. Working on your own initiative you will be responsible for the efficient running of the office. Excellent salary & benefits. Please send CV to: Karen Hillyard, 17 Grosvenor Place, W1T 6HG.

PA/ASSISTANT CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

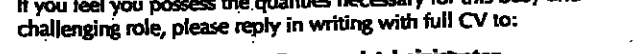
PolyGram International's Corporate Communications department is looking for a hard working, resourceful person with excellent communication skills, to work as Personal Assistant to both the Head of Corporate Communications and the PR Manager, based in Central London.

This position will include all secretarial and administrative support for the department. In addition, there will be opportunities over time to manage your own projects and become fully involved in PolyGram's internal and external communications.

The ideal candidate should be educated to minimum A-level standard, and be able to show an interest in and aptitude for writing and media relations, with a background in these areas being a distinct advantage. You must be skilled at using Windows and WordPerfect (including fast accurate typing) with proven secretarial experience. This role will require you to be extremely well-organised and able to work on your own initiative, in addition to possessing common sense, a pleasant manner, and the ability to work as part of a team.

If you feel you possess the qualities necessary for this busy and challenging role, please reply in writing with full CV to:

Jane Brennan, Personnel Administrator,
PolyGram International,
8 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4JU.
Fax: 0171 747 4491
to arrive not later than Monday 3rd March 1997.



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EXECUTIVE

PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO

THE VICE PRESIDENT

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NETG is a global leader in the development and distribution of technology-based training courses. We are looking for a Personal Assistant to the Vice President.

Due to the expansion of its international markets, the Vice President requires a Personal Assistant to support him in his role as Vice President. The successful candidate will be responsible for a wide range of administrative tasks, including:

• Managing the Vice President's diary and travel arrangements
• Handling correspondence and reports
• Managing the Vice President's office and ensuring a high standard of presentation
• Acting as a liaison between the Vice President and other senior management
• Managing the Vice President's personal and professional life

The successful candidate will be a highly motivated, organised and efficient person with excellent communication skills and a proven ability to work under pressure. The role offers a competitive salary and excellent benefits package.

Please send your CV and a covering letter to: NETG, 100, Old Street, London EC1A 1SD. Closing date: 28 February 1997.

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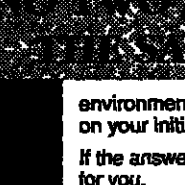
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
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Woodstock re



POP 1

On the eve of the Brit Awards the pop industry is already celebrating thanks to bands like the Spice Girls



POP 2

Galway plays host to the Aloof, whose sleepy cocktail of trip-hop, dub and rock grooves delights the crowd

THE TIMES ARTS



RISING STAR

Composer Jane Gardner is Scottish and a woman, but it certainly hasn't done her career any harm



OFFER

Theatre Club members are invited to join in Radio 3's Stravinsky celebrations

On Monday, the Brit Awards will pay tribute to an astounding British success story. Plus, pop reviews

Land of pop and glory

David Sinclair on why the bosses of the popular music industry are in a mood to party these days

The British music industry, for so long the black sheep of the business community, is at last being recognised as one of the country's conspicuous success stories. Coinciding with the triumph of Spice Girls in America — which this week became the thirty-first country where their debut single *Wannabe* has reached No 1 — the publication of the trade figures for 1996 has marked a sea change in perceptions of the industry. What ever happens at Monday's Brit Awards — the industry's annual gong-giving gala at which the nation's pop stars traditionally dispose themselves with all the social graces of a hahoon colony — the music business has gained dramatic new respect, if not respectability.

The figures speak for themselves. Britain is the world's fourth largest music market (after America, Japan and Germany). While the global music business has generally been flat over the past year, the value of British record sales rose by 6.1 per cent, more than twice the rate of inflation and substantially more than comparable markets such as Japan (3 per cent), America (1 per cent) and France (0.1 per cent). According to a report in *Sunday Business*, the British music industry is now worth £2.5 billion a year, generating more money for the economy than shipbuilding, electronic components and water supply. About 30 per cent of the music industry's output is exported, well above the average for the economy as a whole, which is roughly 8 per cent. A 1995 report by British Invisibles on the overseas earnings of the music industry estimated that it made a net surplus of £571 million, equivalent to the overseas earnings of the steel industry.

More difficult to quantify is how seriously the music business is now being taken and its executives recognised as the captains of industry that they undoubtedly are. Paul Conroy, managing director of Virgin Records UK, points out that, with an election round the corner, politicians of every hue have been wooing the industry in recent weeks.

"They're all taking the Clintonesque view. Fifty of us went up to the House of Commons the other week to have our Tony Blair chat-ette. Virginia Bottomley has been making speeches at MTV presentations. In all the years I've been in the industry, I've never known such attention."

Given the music industry's continuing strength and vitality (1995 was also a record year), the real surprise is that it has not been taken more seriously before now. Its lack of credibility is part of a lingering mindset in certain establishment quarters that regards popular music as a lowbrow and culturally insignificant pursuit.

These days the music industry is indeed virtually synonymous with popular music. According to a recent British Phonographic Industry analysis, recordings by pop, rock and dance acts accounted for 78.3 per cent of total album sales. The combined album sales of easy listening, country, jazz, folk, reggae and blues accounted for a further 13.4 per cent, while sales of classical music totalled just 7.4 per cent. Sales of singles, meanwhile, are virtually all accounted for by popular-based music genres. "Politicians have paid lip-



A bed of English roses: Spice Girls' debut single *Wannabe* has gone to No 1 in 31 countries, part of a remarkable renaissance in the fortunes of the British pop music industry

service to the music industry in the past," says international marketing consultant Jon Webster. "But they didn't really want to be involved. But now they see what it's worth and that it's something we're good at. Also, political leaders are now much more attuned to popular music. Edward Heath was a classical conductor; Tony Blair played in a rock band. Popular music is something the new establishment people have grown up with."

The other obvious attraction of supporting the popular music industry is that it does not cost anything. Unlike the "highbrow" and other arts, the pop business is perfectly able to support itself. "It's not like Dickie Attenborough turning up at No 10 saying, 'Can we have another £10 million for seedcorn capital to make British films?' We don't need it," Webster says.

Dave Laing, a research fellow at the University of Westminster, is one of many commentators who regard popular music as absolutely central to the cultural as well as the economic wellbeing of Britain. "It's not part of the established arts, with the established structures of support and training. It is music from below, and there are a very large number of young, what we used to call working-class people involved in it. And that is important in the context of future patterns of work and the continued blurring of the

dividing lines between work and leisure." Stuart McAllister, the chairman of HMV Worldwide, notes that while sales of records by some of our more established acts, such as Sting, Phil Collins and Simply Red, seem to be slowing up, it is our younger acts that have prompted the resurgence of interest in British music abroad. "It seems to be tied in with a fascination with British fashion in a more general sense. When you see new pop bands like Spice Girls, Bush and Worlds Apart doing so well in America and Europe, you feel that something interesting is afoot."

"Creativity is a cyclical process," says Paul Burger, CEO of Sony Music and chairman of the Brits. "We've been fortunate in that our creative upswing has coincided with a creative downswing in some of the other major markets. Things were flat here three or four years ago when the American music industry was in the middle of the Seattle rock sound and the urban/rap music scene. Now things have gone a bit flat in America, while things have been percolating at a much higher level here. So now the Americans and the Europeans are taking a much closer interest in what's happening here."

The Brit Awards take place on Monday at Earls Court. Highlights can be seen on ITV on Tuesday at 8pm.

Woodstock regained

Ambling onstage at the Jazz Cafe, and before he plays a note, Richie Havens goes into a ten-minute rap about his first meeting with Bob Dylan in a Greenwich Village coffee house in 1962. After 40 minutes and half a dozen stories, Havens has not even started his fifth song. As each number averages between three and four minutes, you can tell he talks a lot. But nobody really minds; he is an entertainer rather than merely a singer and they are all good stories.

Yet we could have done with a little more music, for Havens still possesses a fine voice, capable of both improbable sweetness on songs such as *God Bless the Child* and a velvet grittiness on *All Along the Watchtower*. And nobody plays an acoustic guitar like him, with his open tunings and hammering style. At first you look around to find the conga player, but there is only Paul Williams, a highly capable second guitarist. The percussion comes entirely from Havens's slapping right hand. He is still unfashionably

committed to political causes and he burns with a mission on Jackson Browne's *Lives in the Balance*. He closed, of course, with *Freedom*, his Woodstock anthem, and if you closed your eyes it was easy to imagine you were back in the mud on Max Yasgur's farm.

Duncan Sheik is causing quite a stir in America. In the wake of Alanis Morissette's success, new singer-songwriters have become an almost entirely female breed and the reappearance of the male of the species comes like a rare, out-of-season butterfly.

Just as Sheik's first single, *Barely Breathing*, has fluttered effortlessly into the Billboard Top 30, he was possibly unwise to abandon the promotional round at home for four low-key dates in Britain. But his doing so was our gain.

On a damp night at the Varsity in Wolverhampton, his warm voice carried the traces of his Carolina upbringing but his influences are unmistakably British. The beguiling melodies, the lush

chord progressions and melancholy lyrics call to mind the tragic figure of Nick Drake. But Drake died more than 20 years ago and Sheik is very much a voice for the restless 1990s: there is a balance between fragility and robustness, and his lyrics are never self-indulgent.

Sheik brought with him only a percussionist and bassist but he augmented songs such as *In the Absence of Sun* with a tape of Simon Hale's sensuous string arrangements from his self-titled debut album. Yet he also showed an ability to rock out, particularly on the catchy *Barely Breathing*. His melodic tone poems tread an emotional tightrope but so far he is keeping his footing admirably.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

Giving satisfaction

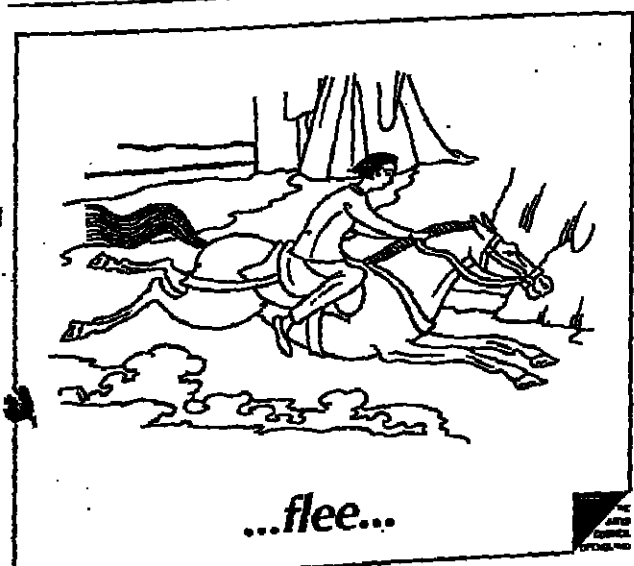
The Aloof Galway

spends a large part of the night standing motionless, clutching the microphone with both hands — the hand play in front of a video screen displaying psychedelic images or documentary clips apposite to each song.

The mugsshots for *Society* were the most visually striking but it is in the lyrics that the Aloof are at their most cinematic. With heartfelt tales of physical and spiritual poverty, they render darkness visible with atmospheric keyboards, spacious guitar and a sinuous rhythm section providing the soundtrack.

After the Scottish leg of their UK tour, they reach London on March 7 and end in Plymouth on March 15. You are advised to get on intimate terms with the Aloof.

NICK KELLY



GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament: JANE GARDNER

Age: 27. Profession: Contemporary composer.

Current work: Five of her song settings receive their world premiere with the Endymion Ensemble at the Queen Elizabeth Hall next Wednesday in *Passages*, a Women's Playhouse Trust presentation on the theme of rootlessness.

What's her experience? She studied under Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and James MacMillan, and has written for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Scottish National Ballet. Maxwell Davies recommended her for a Guliver Award bursary for

young composers which took her to Indonesia to study gamelan for three months. "I have to admit it hasn't done me any harm being Scottish and being a woman," she says disarmingly.

What's next? She has received a Scottish Arts Council award for *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*, a music and dance piece based on the Grimm fairytale to be performed by the Paragon Ensemble in Edinburgh later this year.

What would her alternative career be? Arts administrator, although by necessity rather than choice. "It's one thing being a composer and producing a big score. But it

never gets performed if someone doesn't do the administration and raise a production budget. I'm doing that at the moment and it's a learning process."

Where does the find inspiration? "I love working in the theatre, with film directors or with choreographers. I haven't worked with a visual artist and I'd like to do that. I love being with people and communicating. I'm not one of those composers who lock themselves away from the world."

Long-term ambitions? "I'd like to develop in television and film music, which is more immediate, more spontaneous."



And? "Well, I'd like to write an opera one day."

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

THIS WEEK'S SPECIAL OFFERS

LONDON Festival Hall March 7, 22
● STRAVINSKY — who better? — is the composer whose work has been chosen by BBC Radio 3 to launch its three-year review of the music of the 20th century, and Theatre Club members are invited to join in the celebrations. We have obtained a limited number of reserved box seats for the concert to be given by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Andrew Davies, and members will be able to meet members of the orchestra at a pre-concert reception.
The first concert, on Friday, March 7, comprises *Persephone*, the melodrama set to words by André Gide, and the opera-oratorio, *Oedipus Rex*. On Saturday, March 22, Stravinsky's opera, *The Rake's Progress*, with words by W.H. Auden, stars Barry Banks and William Shinnell. Tickets cost £11 per person per concert. To book, please send a cheque, made payable to the BBC Symphony Orchestra, to reach Lisa Owen-Jones, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Delaware Road, London W9 2LG by Feb 28.

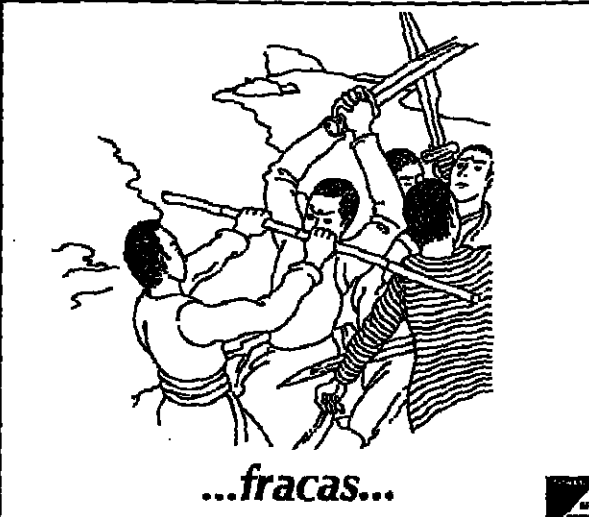
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MUSIC 1



The Houston Symphony, with Christoph Eschenbach at the helm, prepares for its British debut

MUSIC 2



The London Sinfonietta devotes a weekend to new music, but Django Bates disappoints with his contribution

THE TIMES ARTS

MUSIC 3



Philippe Herreweghe conducts a colourful account of Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ*

TOMORROW



John Travolta stars as an angel with a mission in *Michael*, the week's big Hollywood release

Underpaid and over here

Coming from a city that is new even by New World standards, the Houston Symphony is an old orchestra. It was founded in 1913, and its long history has been shaped by a distinguished line of conductors, including Beecham, Stokowski, Bartoli and Previn — giving it strong British connections which will not be lost on the orchestra when it makes its British debut at the Barbican on Saturday. But the band owes much of its current reputation to Christoph Eschenbach, who during his nine years in Houston has created a success story comparable to Slatkin in Saint Louis.

The sound now is rich and well upholstered, but with plenty of individuality that distinguishes it from many generalised American super-orchestras. Ten years ago the situation was very different: when Eschenbach arrived in Texas it would have been hard for him not to have improved the orchestra. Morale was so low among the players that some even jokingly blamed their music director, Sergiu Comissiona, for the big mid-1980s bust when the oil market collapsed, leaving stretches of the city boarded up. But just as the Houston economy diversified, Eschenbach encouraged the orchestra to reinvent itself and seek both higher and wider artistic goals. And the players love him for it.

Among the United States' 20 full-time orchestras, the Houston

MUSIC: John Allison on the British debut of the hard-working Houston Symphony

Symphony is one of the busiest. Its home is Jones Hall in brash but beautiful downtown Houston, though many of the band's 200-plus annual performances take it elsewhere, from the neighbouring opera house where it plays for six productions a year, to the community outreach programmes in schools throughout the city.

"We'd like to be the heroes for the city, along with our basketball team," said one of the players — and the orchestra is certainly the object of very tangible civic pride. It needs to be, with a budget of \$19 million this year, of which only 3 per cent will come from public funds.

Can money buy a good orchestra? Houston, the nouveau-riche capital of the world, ought to provide an answer, but the musicians laugh nervously at the question. Their next three-year contract is currently being negotiated, and they are hurt that when the orchestra is playing so well they have been approached for a cut in pay. This year has not been a good one for the boards and players of American orchestras —

several have been on strike, including the San Francisco Symphony, which downed instruments during its European tour — and the Houstoners, resent being paid less than their colleagues in many other cities. "The orchestra improved so quickly that pay didn't keep up," explained one musician. "A board member said to us, 'Well, we just didn't expect the orchestra to be this good.' It's the level of music-making that keeps us here."

What, then, attracted Eschenbach to the Houston Symphony? "When I came here first as a guest conductor, I saw it as a sleeping beauty, with forces to be awakened and developed. I was offered the job two years after leaving the Tonhalle Orchestra in Zurich, and I felt I needed my own orchestra again. But most of all, I was interested in being an American music director, having to take care of everything, the fund-raising, the welfare of the players and, of course, the music. Turning the orchestra around took a lot of work, but I think it is now something very special."

The 66-year-old Eschenbach still makes regular appearances in Europe, and from 1998 he will also be principal conductor of the NDR Symphony Orchestra in Hamburg. But he regards the United States as home, and works with many of the major orchestras there as well as being music director of the Ravinia Festival, base of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra during the summer. It is a very different musical world from the one he grew up in, emerging first as one of the leading German pianists of his generation and then as a conductor under such mentors as Karajan and Szell.

Although he has conducted the



Conductor Christoph Eschenbach has encouraged the Texan orchestra to reinvent itself and seek higher and wider artistic goals

premieres of many American works, Eschenbach's European roots have left a particular mark on the orchestra's repertoire. Many of its recordings feature late Romantic works and the Second Viennese School — and it is boldly focusing on this music during its five-country European tour, with just one American score, Christopher Rouse's short, frantic *Phaethon*, programmed in some cities (but not London). Apart from some very Texan friendliness, the Houston Symphony will not be making any national statements. Eschenbach would rather "let audiences hear what we've achieved, what we can do together. We will not be trying to show that we're an American orchestra."

Eschenbach and the Houston Symphony are at the Barbican on Saturday (071-638 8891)

OPERA: Handsome settings but a slow Scottish start



A sparkling double act: Lisa Milne as Adele with Ailsa Mooney as her sister, Ida

Porridge with cream

SO LONG as it is party time, Scottish Opera's new *Fledermaus* glitters away. Kenny Miller has devised a handsome setting at the Theatre Royal for Prince Orlofsky's champagne reception: a series of arches, covered in green creeper and bright lights, disappears into the distance. Giles Haverall, taking an operatic break from the Citizens' Theatre's flimsy *Johann Strauss's* flimsy Act III on to the end of the Orlofsky reveries, stager through a startle down towards Governor Frank's prison.

Once there Froch's rambling reminiscences have mercifully been cut. They can turn *Fledermaus* into a long haul. Strauss only wrote one big number for the last act and Haverall wisely wraps up proceedings fast.

But he needs to get more life

Die Fledermaus Glasgow

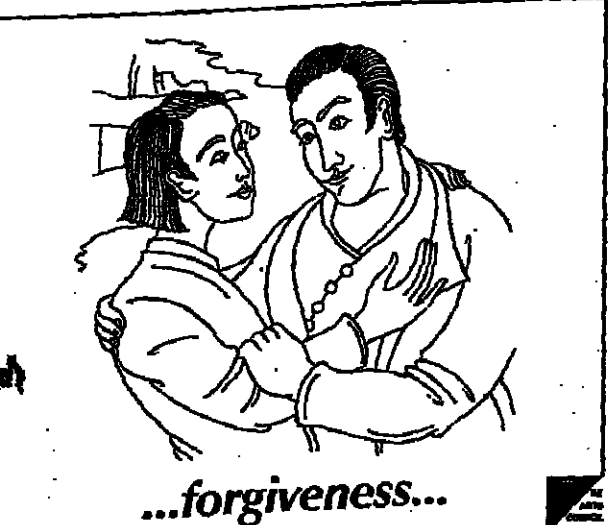
— and jokes — into Act I. Stodgy conducting from Nicholas Braithwaite, in an inauspicious debut with the company, did not help. The Scottish Opera Orchestra, with the strings especially poor, served up lumpy Lowlands porridge instead of Viennese whipped cream. With the temperature in the pit so tepid the principals took time to establish themselves.

In David Pountney's English version von Eisenstein is a builder, and not a very tasteful one to judge from the gross pink poodles covering the walls of his living room — clever Miller again. Peter Evans makes him a pleasant, lightweight character who is never going to be a match for his wife. Similarly Richard

Coxon's Alfred, despite dispatching one tenor favourite after another, is unlikely to make top of the bill at the State Opera. Even Frank (Andrew Slater in diverting form) is another blunderer as he whisks off Alfred to his rick or "aviary", where presumably all the inmates are doing hard. The Haverall thesis is that the Viennese bourgeoisie are a bunch of failures, especially the males of the species. They may treat their women as baubles but they are the ones who are ultimately dangled on a string. Lisa Milne's Adele is the first to make this clear, a pert and plump parlour maid as sure to get her own way in the end as Figaro's Susanna. She is an expert comedienne, especially in her Glaswegian Act II double act with sister Ida (Ailsa Mooney). She snaps out her "I want to be an actress" aria with great aplomb and, as she goes off with Governor Frank at the end, she is clearly another one destined to reach the footlights via the law.

Janis Kelly took more time to breathe life into Rosalinde. The soprano was hard and scratchy to start, but she dazzled finally with the csardas, sung in Hungarian — or was it Pountney-speak? In any case surtitles flashed up in one of the production's best jokes. Anne Howells made no attempt to turn Orlofsky into a 17-year-old princeling, contenting herself with an old-fashioned music-hall drag act, a Burlington Bertie from Minsk. After a cautious start she got going once the royal champagne began to flow.

JOHN HIGGINS



CONCERTS: Showcase for the moderns; disappointment in Birmingham; beautiful Berlioz

The clique that clicks

Naming itself after one of those grandly titled television debates, the London Sinfonietta's *State of the Nation* weekend took the temperature of new compositional activity in Britain and delivered an encouraging certificate of good health. That new music should be flourishing at a time when our political masters seem intent on draining the lifeblood from our cultural institutions is a phenomenon that requires some explanation.

In his introductory essay in the programme, the composer Julian Anderson suggested one reason that was borne out during the weekend: despite the unsympathetic politico-economic climate, the human climate remains warm — composers actually talk to each other. If the outside impression is sometimes of a self-perpetuating clique, there is also a genuine support network in place, as was evident in a valuable opening forum.

Several of the event's co-sponsoring organisations — the Society for the Promotion of New Music, the Sonic Arts Network and BBC Radio 3 among them — put their resources and expertise at the disposal of non-established composers. The SPNM, we learn, calls for scores each year and examines every one of the 400-500 it receives. The Sonic Arts Network offers concert, education and information facilities to those interested in electro-acoustic and related forms of composition.

State of the Nation Queen Elizabeth Hall

dream-like experiences, impressed even more than on his first hearing two years ago. Philip Cashian's *Chamber Concerto* — its concertante element provided by cadenzas for oboe, trombone and violin — proves a worthy companion piece for the Berg work of the same name, from its opening walking bass to its atmospheric still coda.

The weekend's big disappointment? The talented, mould-breaking Django Bates

brought his quartet Human Chain to join the Sinfonietta under Markus Stenz. His three pieces, *Some More Upsets*, may or may not have successfully mixed "the brain of jazz", as he pithily puts it. But we'll never know. The amplification of his group completely swamped the sounds produced by the Sinfonietta's 14 musicians sitting behind. All one could hear was a piccolo, percussion and a mass of noise. What a criminal waste of good musicians!

BARRY MILLINGTON

Stale labours

An ensemble such as the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, which exists primarily to bring new music into the world, has the right to fail from time to time. So it is just bad luck that, having commissioned so many winners since it was founded ten years ago, it has failed twice in three weeks. Peter-Paul Nash's Symphony No 2 is shorter than Gerard McBurney's *Desire*, but it is no better.

The problem with the latest product of BCMG's Sound Investment Scheme, presented at the centre of another over-long programme in the Adrian Boult Hall, is its lack of

BCMG/Kraemer Birmingham

originality. New music does not have to offer new sounds, new techniques or even new material, but it must, surely, display some evidence of fresh thinking. Take Nicholas Maw's *Ghost Dances* — one of the more successful of the older pieces in the concert: it is quite conventional in harmony, but it is inspired by such an individual aural imagination, motivated by such captivating rhythms, coloured by such sensitive scoring that it sounds consistently and engagingly like nothing else.

Nash's Symphony No 2 is basically another conventional piece. It is also primitive in technique, heavily reliant on the elementary stock-in-trade of both instrumental and vocal sounds, texturally confused where the two of them mix, laborious in construction, insufferably crude in its culminating use of percussion, altogether bereft of any idea fresh enough to capture the initially willing if ultimately reluctant ear. Never having dreamt of the tropical island paradise for which the work is said by its composer to be a metaphor, maybe I don't have the imagination to meet it halfway. But I suspect that — in spite of the advocacy of conductor Nicholas Kraemer and the participation of the City of Birmingham Youth Chorus in uttering lines from Auden and Stevens — halfway wouldn't have been far enough.

TESS KNIGHTON GERALD LARNER

A sublime period piece

No one could dispute that Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ* is a work of great beauty, full of sublime moments. David Cairns has recently argued for the importance of period-instrument performance in the face of increasing homogeneity of tone among modern symphony orchestras, and there is no doubt in my mind that only through attempting to reconstruct something of Berlioz's sound world can we truly appreciate his originality. Thus the contribution of the Orchestre des Champs-Elysees, playing on instruments that Berlioz would have recognised, was crucial to the overall impression of this performance conducted by Philippe Herreweghe.

La Chapelle Royale Barbican

bassoons cut plangently through the texture, the clarinets added a much more clearly defined centre to the overall sound and the flutes shimmered in their remarkable duet with harp representing the entertainment provided by the Ishmaelites during the Holy Family's exile in Egypt.

Herreweghe's orchestral team brought out well these colours, intrinsic to Berlioz's storytelling and sense of drama. His choir, La Chapelle Royale and the Ghent Collegium Vocale, made an equally important contribution, notably in their final, unaccompanied chorus in which they achieved that rare quality in music: a sense of total stillness. Equally magical were the angelic greetings, well sustained by the female members of the choir, and, of course, that most familiar of Berlioz's choral pieces, *The Shepherds' Farewell*, with some particularly reedy inter-

The buzzwords heard on all sides are "diversity" and "open door policy" — at once, perhaps, an acknowledgement of Nineties plurality and of past exclusions. Much of this was reflected in the various projects throughout the weekend: composer surgeries led by Param Vir and Diana Burrell; a performance of Fraser Trainers' *True to Life* with the participation of three children's groups; and workshops organised by COMA (Contemporary Music-Making for Amateurs).

Altogether some 39 new or nearly new works were heard. In a London Sinfonietta concert on Saturday evening conducted by Paul Daniel, David Sawyer's *Tirolis* and Keith Johnson's *Sabotage* received their world premieres. The latter, with its deliberate disjunctions and crude effects, I enjoyed less than *Tirolis*, whose title refers to the interlocking episodes that cleverly, sometimes humorously, shift the gears of the moto perpetuo passages. Richard Causton's *The Persistence of Memory*, with its vividly remembered

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FOOTBALL

Arsenal to examine champions' resolve

BY PETER BALL

MANCHESTER United's FA Carling Premiership title credentials will be fully tested over the next four days when they make two trips to the capital. They face third-placed Arsenal at Highbury tonight, with Chelsea awaiting them on Saturday, but Alex Ferguson, the United manager, was keen to play down the significance of the matches.

"These two games are very, very important," he said, "but no more so than the next 11 after them. At this stage of the season, getting points in all the games is the target."

Victory for Arsenal, and for Liverpool against Leeds United at Anfield tonight, would see both sides leapfrog United at the top of the table. A couple of weeks ago Ferguson said that the ball was in Arsenal's court as the other main contenders for the championship still had to visit

Highbury. A victory by United tonight, however, would raise some questions about the London club's ability to go the distance.

United and Arsenal have had some tight matches — and some virulent ones — over the years, and Ferguson expects another difficult match tonight.

"Arsenal have changed a bit," he said. "Tactically, they give Bergkamp a lot of freedom. He links well with Merson and they have more flexibility, are a bit more subtle than they were. But it's the same nucleus at the back that we've played against for ten years. They are very experienced, they've always been very competitive and it won't be any different this time."

Eric Cantona, the United

captain, will miss the games against Arsenal and Chelsea because of suspension, as will Paul Scholes, who is recovering from an operation. In their absence, Ferguson may contemplate playing Cole and Solskjaer as an orthodox strike force, or he may decide to play only one, with Butt returning to join Beckham and Keane in midfield, and Giggs and Poyresky playing wide. May and Philip Neville are also in the squad.

Seaman, the Arsenal goalkeeper, has failed to recover in time from the knee ligament injury that kept him out of England's World Cup qualifying match against Italy last week, but Adams, the captain, has shown no reaction after playing against Tottenham Hotspur last Saturday, despite a damaged ankle, and will again lead the side against United.

Arsene Wenger, the Arsenal manager, said: "Seaman is much better than at the weekend, but not quite ready yet. Hopefully, he will be under consideration for next Sunday's game against Wimbledon."

Lukic will continue to deputise for Seaman, and Wenger, who is expected to name an unchanged side, said: "John filled the team with plenty of confidence in the Tottenham match and showed that he is an impressive goalkeeper. If he plays like that again we can have no worries."

Platt, the Arsenal midfielder, has resumed training after a hamstring injury and could return against Wimbledon.

The FA Cup quarter-final tie between the Nationwide League second-division teams, Chesterfield and Wrexham, will be played on Sunday, March 9, after police advice. Chesterfield's near neighbours, Derby County, have a home match on the Saturday — against either Southampton in the Premiership, or Middlesbrough in the Cup if Derby defeat Coventry City next Wednesday.

A spokesman for Derbyshire Police said: "Chesterfield and Derby are only 26 miles apart and we do not have the resources to man both Cup games on the same day."

Stockport look up to guardian Angell

David Maddock on
a travelling player
calming the nerves
of cup inexperience

Shuffling around awkwardly, eyes wide with barely concealed awe, the younger members of the Stockport County Coca-Cola Cup semi-final squad were clearly unused to the strange ritual of a media open day in a swanky Cheshire hotel.

Mottram Hall is a country house that plays host to the rich and famous of the North West. Its marbled corridors and grandly ornate rooms are familiar to captains of industry and leading sportsmen. Germany stayed here during the European championships. Alex Ferguson and Eric Cantona are regular visitors.

Stockport players are not. They have beaten three Premiership clubs on their way to a semi-final tie with Middlesbrough but the Nationwide League second-division players are still unfamiliar with the big time. "It's all a mistake," their expressions said. "I shouldn't be here."

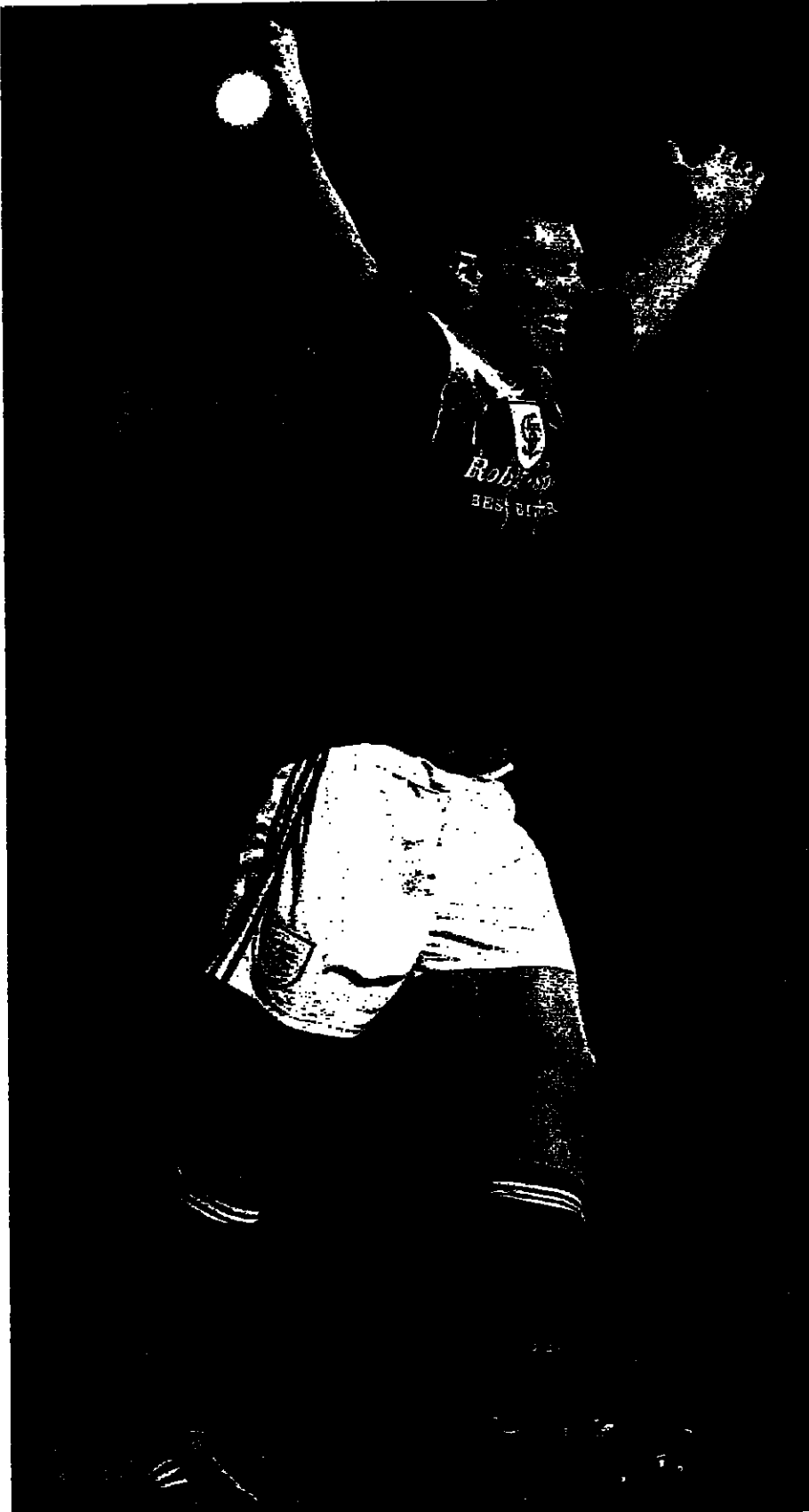
It is one thing, of course, upsetting big teams in the cup, quite another arriving as a fancied side in a semi-final. Stockport have performed heroically to get this far, but the impression lingers that they have wandered slightly out of their depth.

One man, though, was at ease with his surroundings at the open day, fielding the double-edged questions of an eager media with relaxed amusement. Brett Angell, who returned earlier this season for his second spell at Stockport, is one of their few players who is at ease with the trappings of the top flight, even if he did not stay there long.

He had unhappy spells with Everton and Sunderland in the Premiership, but Angell, 28, believes that both clubs offered positive experiences. "I am relaxed now, happy with my life at Stockport," he explained. "Before I went to Everton I was so ambitious, so eager to move up, that I was anxious. I didn't enjoy the experience of playing football."

"Now I am back with Stockport I haven't lost ambition, but I can enjoy times like this far more. We are in a semi-final and it is a great experience, but before I may have let it pass me by, wanting to earn that big move. Now, if one comes along, great. If not, then I can live with it because I can appreciate what we are achieving here."

David Jones, the Stockport manager, has fostered an



The imposing presence of Angell has inspired an unlikely attack on the Coca-Cola Cup.

atmosphere of fevered ambition at the club. "If they don't want to go on to bigger things, then I don't want them here," he said yesterday.

Angell, though, is a rare exception because he has already done it, albeit briefly.

He played barely 15 games for Everton, an uncomfortable outsider during the unhappy reign of Mike Walker. Then, signed by Mick Buxton for Sunderland, he did not

manage ten games under the new manager, Peter Reid. Each time he was denied a fair opportunity because the club was in turmoil.

He refuses, however, to look for excuses. "I could blame the circumstances but I am an honest person — too honest sometimes — and I can hold my hands up and say I didn't do the business when I was in the team, I didn't score the goals," he said.

"It is something I have brought back to Stockport with me. I am not bitter, if anything I feel the opposite, because I don't think I have anything to prove. But I still have ambition and I want to be a success here, get us into the final and win promotion."

A towering centre forward, Angell is often described as "old-fashioned" in the sense that his ability in the air perhaps outweighs his con-

trol or mobility. He is no mug, though, and represents Stockport's best chance against a Middlesbrough defence that even the kindest observers would describe as suspect.

It is Angell's experience on what will be a venture into the unknown that will be most valuable to Stockport. He has the presence and intelligence to calm those around him, to remind them that they are simply continuing an adventure started with the defeat of Blackburn Rovers rather than entering the pressure-laden environs of a semi-final. And he believes, passionately, that they can progress to the final.

"Middlesbrough will be worried because we don't really have much to lose," he said. "The fact is that they are a Premiership side and we are from the second division, so we really shouldn't be expected to win and we know that we would have no chance in the Premiership, because we couldn't do it week in, week out."

"But we do know that we can do it occasionally, as our wins over Rovers, West Ham and Southampton have proved. This is where it gets tricky, because suddenly we have all the pressure, the interest, the tension that a semi brings. But if we can reproduce our best form then we know we can beat them."

Stockport and now Wrexham and Chesterfield have proved that there is quality in the lower divisions, and yet more and more Premiership managers say that there are not the players to be found lower down any more. Why the apparent contradiction? Angell believes that it is the pernicious effect of money that is slowly ripping the game apart.

"There are plenty of players in our division who could play in the Premiership, but these days they cost real money," he said. "In the past, a lower-division player could go into the reserves at a bigger club and experience slowly what it is all about."

"Nowadays, if a player costs a million pounds then he has to go straight into the team because everything is instant. Money demands instant success. It is too much of a risk to take players from our level on those terms, even though the players are there all right."

Stockport are intent on proving as much this evening, as they look to give another of the Premiership aristocrats a bloodied nose. With an Angell hovering at the far post, who would bet against it?

Diary, page 18

Boyd ban adds to selection worries for Burns

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

TOM BOYD, the Celtic defender, will miss the Bell's Scottish League premier division match against Rangers next month, as well as a possible Old Firm meeting in the quarter-final of the Tennent's Scottish Cup. Boyd was booked in the 1-1 draw with Hibernian at Easter Road in the fourth-round tie on Monday night, and will now be suspended for three matches next month.

The Scotland international will miss Celtic's away game against Kilmarnock on March 4, the Cup quarter-final home tie against Rangers on March 8 — assuming that Celtic beat Hibernian in their replay at Parkhead next Wednesday — and the home game against Rangers on March 16.

It is a setback for Tommy Burns, the Celtic manager, whose side trails Rangers, the champions, and leaders by seven points. Burns is also without Jackie McNamara, his Scotland international right back, who is struggling with a hamstring injury. McNamara missed the cup-tie on Monday night and is doubtful for the match away to Motherwell on Saturday.

Alan Stubbs is already ruled out of that match because of a one-match ban after exceeding the 16-point disciplinary limit.

On top of injury and suspensions, Burns's selection process is also being hindered by international call-ups. After being without Jorge Cadete, their Portugal international striker, on Monday because of his country's match against Greece tonight, Burns could lose Pierre Van Hooijdonk for the replay next Wednesday. The striker is expected to be named in the Holland squad for the match against France in Paris on the same night.

Hibernian now face two trips to Glasgow in four days, as they play Rangers at Ibrox on Sunday in a premier division match before the cup replay with Celtic. They may be struggling in the league but their bank balance has received a healthy boost from their exploits in the Cup. The replay will earn them around £300,000.

Brighton poll plan gets cool reception

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

PAUL SCALLY, the Gillingham chairman, has asked representatives of Brighton and Hove Albion supporters to carry out a survey to determine whether fans want the proposed ground-share at Priestfield to go ahead.

His move follows a threat to scrap the two-year arrangement because of fierce opposition from some Brighton supporters, who object to making a round trip of 170 miles to attend home games.

Liz Costa, vice-chair of the official supporters' club, said yesterday that she thought the Gillingham chairman was wrong to put the onus on Brighton fans. "If Mr Scally believes he has made a mistake, it is for him to tear up the contract," she said. "I've had discussions with him... and he wants us to talk to other supporters' groups to see if another survey is needed."

"But our first survey resulted in only 2 per cent of fans saying they were prepared to go to Gillingham, while 75 per cent said they would go but only if the club had new owners and there was a new stadium to come back to."

Ian Hart, co-editor of the Brighton fanzine, *Gulls Eye*, said that the Brighton chairman, Bill Archer, should pursue one of two options if Scally pulls out, leaving Brighton homeless at the end of the season. He said: "Archer could try and go in with the consortium leader, Dick Knight, and attempt to get a temporary ground in the Brighton area, or he could negotiate a deal with the developers, Chartwell, to remain at the Goldstone Ground which, I'm led to believe, is still an option."

"If Brighton had to sell their ground to cover debts, fair enough, but they should have had a leaseback agreement so Chartwell could not bring in the bulldozers before the new ground was finished."

Cardiff supporters will not be allowed to attend the third division match against Swansea at the Vetch Field on March 2, because of a history of trouble between supporters.

Juventus endorse benefits of Oxford education

FROM RUSSELL KEMPSON IN GENOA

AS THE repercussions of the Bosman ruling continue to rumble on, with football's borders broken down, the exchanges of talent between countries took an unlikely twist yesterday — from Juventus, of Italy, to Oxford United, of the Nationwide

League first division. Negotiations between the clubs, spearheaded by Robin Herd, the Oxford chairman, are at an advanced stage.

Though the move was greeted by surprise in Italy, Juventus are believed to be interested in using the club as a "finishing school" for their most promising 19- and 20-year-old players. If it is

sanctioned by the Football League and Football Association, the arrangement, which also includes an exchange of ideas, could come into force next season.

"It is very exciting but Juventus are not just going to send us players," Herd said. "They have managed to combine the traditional technical brilliance of the continentals with the power and pace of the British. They will also be showing us how they go about doing it."

It was news, too, to the Football League delegation here in Genoa, on the north west coast of Italy, for the representative game between the Nationwide League and Serie B at the Luigi Ferraris Stadium, home of Sampdoria and Genoa, this afternoon. The immediate reaction was one of caution.

David Shephanks, the new chairman of the Football League, said: "The exchange of views, skills and coaching between countries has to be

welcomed but we have to be careful about preserving a level playing field for everyone in the League. We have to be sure it fits comfortably with the wishes of the majority."

The long-term loaning of young players, usually for a season, is commonplace in the Italian league. Seven of those in the Serie B squad to play the Nationwide League have

been farmed out from clubs in Serie A.

Brian Horton, the Huddersfield Town manager, who is coaching the Nationwide League side, expects a formidable task. His line-up comprises of only under-21 players, even though they are among the most highly rated in the league.

"This is very important for their education," Horton said. "Some of them have hardly been abroad let alone played there. You always take pride in any game, and always want to win, but the main object is for them to go out and enjoy it. They have nothing to lose, nothing to fear, and it should be a valuable experience for all of them."

Horton is likely to utilise the majority of his squad at some stage and for Darren Purse, 20, one of the substitutes, it is perhaps an ideal opportunity. Should the Oxford central defender come on and produce a good display, the Juventus scouts may be watching.

TEAMS

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: A Marshall (Northwich City); A Moses (Barnley); A Rodgers (Grimsby Town); G Searles (Oxford Athletic); D Mills (Northwich City); D Hamilton (Bradford City); C Holland (Barnsley); B Hughes (Wrexham); J Brashbury (Preston North End); M Boleck (Barnsley); B Dyer (Luton Town); D Palmer (Oxford United); G Newton (Chatham Athletic); S Taylor (Barnsley); I Lawson (Huddersfield Town).

SERIE B (probable): M Gennaro (Chievo); D Biondi (Cesena); E Biondi (Verona); S Lavia (Chievo); L Mazzaro (Torino); A Pini (Salernitana); G Pini (Ravenna); G Tedesco (Palermo); A Zanchetta (Foggia); G Zavanelli (Verona); M Caracciolo (Brescia); S Mariani (Torino); G Zavanelli (Cosenza); G Amadio (Livorno); V Sormani (Torino); V Chianese (Foggia); D Di Michele (Foggia).

Wright price persuades Forest

NOTTINGHAM Forest have agreed to sell Tommy Wright, the Northern Ireland international goalkeeper, to Manchester City, but not before he has made one final appearance for the struggling FA Carling Premiership side (Richard Hobson writes).

Wright is on loan at Maine Road and will continue to train with City. However, he will return to Forest to play against Tottenham Hotspur on March 1 because Mark Crossley is suspended after his sending-off in the FA Cup fifth-round tie against Chesterfield on Saturday.

The clubs have agreed a fee of £450,000 and Wright is prepared to sign the necessary documents immediately after the game at White Hart Lane.

Forest have ensured that Nigel Clough will remain with them on loan from City for a third month.

It is the second time that Frank Clark, the City manager, has signed Wright. Four years ago, as the Forest manager, he bought him from Newcastle United, also for £450,000, but the form of Crossley and a succession of injuries has restricted him to only ten league games.

Wright, 33, said that he almost retired 15 months ago, but his fortunes improved when he went to Reading on loan. He regained his international place on the back of those performances.

Meanwhile, Irving Korn, the Forest chairman, has given his strongest hint yet that

the club will be forced to sell its best players if the takeover situation is not resolved at an extraordinary general meeting on Monday next week.

"There are two bids and, if neither is accepted, the club will be in a position the next day where it will have to raise substantial funds urgently," Korn said.

Doug Sharpe, the Swansea City chairman, has put the Nationwide League, third division side back up for sale at £300,000 — a fifth of the sum that he says the club owes him. Sharpe's decision comes against a background of disputes between him and Jan Molby, the player-manager. "I have done my best to keep the club in the top four," Sharpe said. "That's my lot."

Eriksson signals Blackburn doubt

FROM RUSSELL KEMPSON IN GENOA

SVEN GÖRAN ERIKSSON, Sampdoria's Swedish coach, yesterday gave the strongest indications yet that he will not be joining Blackburn Rovers for the start of next season.

Even though Eriksson signed a three-year contract at Ewood Park two months ago, it is now expected that he will leave Sampdoria, the Serie A club based here, for Lazio, of Rome.

Eriksson, 49, one of Europe's most respected coaches, was speaking at Sampdoria's training ground in the foothills of Bogliasco, near Genoa, on the Mediterranean coast.

"I have been in good contact with Blackburn and I talk to them regularly," Eriksson said. "They are aware of what is happening." Significantly, though, he has not spoken with Tony Parkes, who took over when Ray Harford resigned in October and, in a caretaker capacity, has helped to lift the club away from the relegation zone in the FA Carling Premiership.

When Eriksson signed for Blackburn for a salary reported to be £1 million a year, Sampdoria were struggling in Serie A. Ironically, they have since regained their form and lie second in the table behind Juventus. "Nobody can believe that we could play so well," he said.

Berti Vogts, the Germany coach, yesterday selected the South African-born Sean Dundee in his squad for an international against Israel on February 26, just two months after the Karlsruhe striker became a German citizen.

Dundee, the Bundesliga's top scorer this season with 14 goals to his name, applied for German citizenship using a special fast-track method for cases of "public interest". His decision to apply for a German passport sparked outrage in his native country, where politicians accused him of turning his back on South Africa and called for the move to be blocked.



Eriksson: strong hint

Though he declined to be drawn on his decision, and phrased his words diplomatically, Italian sources believe that Blackburn will be ultimately disappointed. "I know more or less what I will do," Eriksson, who has spent five years with Sampdoria, said. "It is very difficult at the moment, there is a big question mark for a lot of people, and it is very awkward for me. I can't really talk about the situation — in Italy, we are not supposed to talk about these things until the end of the season — but when it is time, I will tell everyone. Perhaps in

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Under fire, there is nothing like a dame

There was a curious start to last night's *Face to Face* (BBC2). According to the opening titles, we were about to watch Sir Jeremy Isaacs talking to Diana Rigg. Shouldn't that be Dame Diana Rigg, I thought? I checked and indeed it should. Some people, it appears, wear their honours more lightly than others.

But that's all by the by, especially as I have no doubt that the decision to ditch the damehood for the occasion was Rigg's. The important thing about last night's interview was that it was very good, with the old formal (spoil subject, unsmiling inquirer) showing that, every now and then, it can still deliver. Much credit for that belongs to Isaacs. Or do I mean Sir Jeremy?

It must have been tempting just to flirt with her. Everyone, after all, flirts with Rigg and when she's in the right sort of mood, she flirts

back and you instantly get lovely television. The only problem is that it's been done dozens of times before. So to get something new required more than his "lady with the superior exterior, one of the greatest actresses of her generation" flattery. Isaacs went high-brow — very high-brow.

Question three, for example, was "what did you find in the text of *Martha's* role in *Virginia Woolf* that particularly appealed to you?" I waited for him to add that she had three hours to answer and he would please write on one side of the paper only, but he didn't. He went on: "What is acting?"

Now, it must be said that Rigg was definitely up for this sort of questioning. Where others might have said "Gosh, that's a difficult one, can we start again?" or "Hang on, can I have a think about it?" she managed to answer each one ("what's your first memory of pleasure in language?" thought

fully and astonishingly fluently. I think the first "er..." came after 19 minutes.

Flirting, however, turned out to be a pleasure postponed rather than cancelled completely. For having taken us through her craft and the early years of a career that combined the Royal Shakespeare Company with Emma Peel, Isaacs turned to the stage roles that consolidated her reputation in the 1970s and 1980s. *Jumpers* for some reason came to mind. Lovely play, brilliant playwright, agreed Rigg. "Taking your clothes off," he mused all of a sudden, "is that a good idea?"

Looking back, no, replied Rigg with a look that said she knew exactly where this line of questioning was going. But then as far as she could recall, her nude scene in *Jumpers* had been pretty tame. "It was my back, wasn't it?" she answered slowly. "Or was it my bum?" Whichever it was had

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

clearly left an impression on Isaacs. "Hm, hm, hm," he agreed from the darkness. "I think so, I think so."

Apart from the annoyance of creaking joints and the injustice of what she termed "the final crumble" not happening to men until much later, Rigg was very positive about getting older. Perhaps she could have a word with John Pilger, who despite being just the

right side of said crumble spent a self-absorbed hour on *Network First* (ITV) trying to turn the clock back 30 years. Back to the good old days of trade unions, picket lines and the Vietnam War. Back to the days when Pilger used to get his picture byline on the front page of the *Daily Mirror*.

As someone who currently gets a picture byline on the inside back cover of *The Times*, I know exactly how he feels. I'd be cross when somebody takes that away, but I'd be surprised if somebody gives me an hour of television to tell you why. Somebody, however — and for reasons that never became apparent — had given Pilger just that.

So having spent a dewy-eyed 20 minutes looking back at the glory years of the *Mirror*, he switched to attack. He blamed Robert Maxwell "the great embellisher" for turning his beloved paper into a family photo album, and he

blamed Rupert Murdoch... well, for everything else. The accusations were familiar, but what was not was the slight of first Hugh Cudlipp, the *Mirror's* distinguished former Editor-in-Chief, and then Lewis Moonie, Labour's spokesman on broadcasting, rallying to Murdoch's defence.

But as Pilger railed against the dying of once-fashionable left-wing causes (let's have more labour disputes on the front pages), he never once stopped to consider that it might be he who was to blame. That the world had moved on and he hadn't. Never mind, I would say that, wouldn't I — just remind me that I wrote it when my own time comes.

Finally it was time for my weekly fix of Fisher Dike, the mathematician who appears destined to ensure that higher mathematics remains a complete mystery to the rest of us. Last

night, in *The Number Game* (BBC2), he was at it again with Bayesian statistics. Bayesian what? Don't ask me — all I know is that it's a great help when you've got your yellow balls and red balls mixed up and second to none at telling whether spots on the face mean you also have measles. But according to the well-intentioned Dike, it is a precise way of dealing with uncertainty.

Unfortunately, the best-known application of Bayes' theorem to the real world involved a rape case, a subject that did not sit easily with Dike's jaunty manner or prove very enlightening.

The fact that the conviction was quashed on appeal turned out to have nothing to do with statistics and DNA samples and everything to do with the fact that the original trial judge had been so busy explaining Bayes' theorem to the jury that he forgot to direct them properly. I sympathised.

BBC1	BBC2
6.00am Business Breakfast (48277)	6.00am Open University: The Emergence of Greek Mathematics (595345) 6.45
7.00am BBC Breakfast News (T) (43635)	From Micro to Macro (595118) 6.50
9.00am Breakfast News Extra (T) (8635987)	Isomorphism (5405428) 7.15 News (T)
9.25 Style Challenge (1292426)	7.30 Captain Caveman (1488426) 7.55
9.45 Kilroy (862390)	Record Breakers Gold (T) (7085871)
10.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (86635)	8.20 Today's Trivia (873048) 8.25 Pop
11.00 News (T) and weather (8209083)	(1389771) 8.35 The Record (954703)
11.05 The Really Useful Show (3100242)	9.00 Jeunes Francophones (T) (75432)
11.35 Change That (5011971)	9.25 See You, See Me (8643584) 9.45
12.00 News (T) and weather (8218818)	Words and Pictures (8911987) 10.00
12.05pm The Alphabet Game (5894987)	Playdays (25797) 10.30 Numberline
12.30 Going for a Song (1717872)	(773258) 10.45 11.00
12.55 The Weather Show (3412068)	Around Scotland (211797) 11.30 Music
1.00 News (T) and weather (48722)	Makers (720242) 11.40 Science in
1.30 Regional News (8119451)	Action (1483600) 12.00 Spanish Globo
1.40 Neighbours (T) (2081242)	(8209161) 12.05pm History File
2.05 Police Rescue (T) (8018345)	(5882529) 12.30 Working Lunch (24971)
2.55 Put it to the Test (2800068)	1.00 Geography Programme (1501819)
3.20 Holiday Outings Bahia in Brazil (T) (3303285)	1.20 Thunderbirds in Frost (12532)
3.30 Playdays (T) (1597432) 3.50	Zag 1.45 Come Outside 2.00 Teddy
Chucklevision (141068) 4.10 Popeye	Trucks (T) 2.05 Spot (T) 2.10 Everyone's
and Son (8691908) 4.35 The Wild Horses	Got One 3.00 News (T) Today's the
(T) (8012600) 5.00 Newsround (T)	Day (277) 4.30 Ready, Steady, Cook
(7980688) 5.10 Blue Peter (T) (1269242)	(161) 5.00 Esther (8916) 5.30 The
5.35 Neighbours (T) (T) (317161)	3.16432) 5.55 Turning Points (733548)
6.00 News (T) and weather (8345)	6.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation (T) (T)
6.30 Newsround South East (364)	(359628)
7.00 Noel's Telly Years Singer and presenter	6.45 Tron and Simon's Transmission
Cheryl Baker and Jockey Bob Champion	Impossible (25229)
recall some of the highlights of 1981 (T)	7.00 Hancock (T) (T) (2180)
(1838)	7.30
7.30 Tomorrow's World British Olympic	Counterblast Scientific writer
hurdler Colin Jackson tests a newly	Nicholas Booth examines the
designed starting block. Plus: how a	doom merchants' predictions of
magnetic scanner is helping breathe	environmental disasters (T) (890)
new life into a car (T) (548)	8.00 Delta Smith's Winter Collection (T) (T)
8.00 The National Lottery Live Cathy Dennis	(5800)
sings her latest hit, <i>Waterloo Sunset</i> ,	8.30 Rick Stein's Fruits of the Sea Rick
before pressing the millionaire-making	prepares a ragout of turbot and scallops
button (T) (789597)	for the Royal Navy (T) (7835)
8.15 25 Years of the Two Ronnies Classic	9.00 The Aristocracy Who has and who
comedy clips (T) (529242)	not cashed in on the tourist industry. Last
8.50 Points of View (388529)	in series (T) (195155)
9.00 News (T) and weather (8345)	9.50
9.25 National Lottery Update (250364)	A Woman Called Smith
9.30	18-part series about women
Insiders New drama series	who share the same surname, beginning
set in an open prison on the	with 20-year-old ballroom dancer, Sarah
Suffolk coast. With Robert Cavanagh, Bill	Smith (T) (138345)
Nightly and Julia Ford (T) (280703)	
10.25 Sportsnight presented by Desmond	
Lynard. Football Highlights of Arsenal's	
top-of-the-table FA Premiership clash	
with Manchester United at Highbury.	
Tennis: Ray Stubs presents a profile of	
Tim Henman, Britain's highest-ranked	
player for 20 years (245890)	
11.25 FILM: <i>Darkman</i> (1990) with Liam	
Nesson, Frances McDormand and Colin	
Fries. A grotesquely disguised scientist	
plots a gruesome revenge on the vicious	
gangsters responsible for mutilating his	
features. Horror thriller directed by Sam	
Raimi (862529)	
12.55am FILM: <i>Life Line to Victory</i> (1993) with	
Morgan Riley, Simon Reynolds, Michael	
Hogan and Henry Czerny. Second World	
War drama about a brave sea captain.	
Directed by Eric Till (896136)	
2.30-2.35 Weather (864048)	

VideoPlus+ and Video PlusCodes	FOX KIDS NETWORK
The numbers next to each TV programme	6.00am Three Little Pigs (733529) 6.30
listing are VideoPlus+ numbers, which	happens (86208)
allow you to programme your video recorder	Pizza Cafe (577600) 7.30 Eagle Riders
with a VideoPlus+ remote. Tap in the	(865628) 8.00 Teenage Mutant Hero
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FOOTBALL 44

Guardian Angell keeps Stockport on the right path

TRIUMPH and drama jostled for England's attention yesterday and there were moments during a nerve-shredding climax to this Test series when it seemed that the titanic achievements of Michael Atherton would be in vain. Victory was sweet justice for a captain whose position can no longer be questioned.

It is the destiny of those who lead indifferent teams to face constant scrutiny and frequent doubt. Atherton has been under this microscope for almost four years now, and sometimes it has not been pleasant, but his perverse ambition to remain in the firing line a little longer is undimmed. No one would dare deny him after he won this match for his side with the most inspiring performance of his career.

Tufnell accused 1
Leading article 19
Simon Barnes 46

Ultimately, it was an unbroken seventh-wicket stand of 76 between John Crawley and Dominic Cork that settled a fluctuating game 16 minutes into its final hour. Without it, England might still have been beaten and the perceptions of their winter's cricket irredeemably scarred. Without Atherton, though, this would not even have been a contest.

The statistics are staggering. He was on the field for all but the last three hours and batted through a total of 744 minutes for his scores of 94 not out and 118. His series average was improved to 108, precisely 100 more than he averaged in the two drawn Tests in Zimbabwe.

Statistics, however, have never been the measure of his man and to play as he did when the stakes were so high and the circumstances so unpromising was one more recital of the unyielding obstinacy that has seen him through so many crises.

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT IN CHRISTCHURCH

Atherton knew that a defeat here, no matter that it might make a travesty of a one-sided series, would undermine all the advances in image and performance that he and his side had made on this leg of the tour. So he did not let it happen, even when the rest of his team played the first half of the Test as if on a course of self-destruction and even when the fourth-innings target was in a territory that only one previous England side had successfully entered, and that almost 70 years ago.

Even Steve Rixon, the New Zealand coach, who consciously belittled England's backbone through this series, was impressed. Asked if he would give Atherton the captaincy against Australia this summer, he said: "I would give him anything he wants tonight. He was a personal inspiration. I admired the way he went about his job."

The contribution of the captain extended beyond his runs. He rallied his players after they had conceded a first-innings lead of 118, instilling a fresh and positive attitude. "The key thing was going out so aggressively for their second innings," he said. "By that, I mean we had the intent to bowl them out, rather than to sit back and watch them build an advantage. I was very keen we should dictate terms and things like Corky bursting through the tunnel onto the field helped set a tone."

Overnight on Monday, though the odds were still in New Zealand's favour, Atherton's presence nagged at their belief. "We knew we had to get him out to win," Stephen Fleming, their captain, said. "When it happened, we were pretty ecstatic." England, although in a position of control, were then suddenly vulnerable in a way that said everything about the stature of their captain.

Atherton had batted through the morning session, first with Andy Caddick for company and then Nasser Hussain. Caddick, the night-watcher, had a reprieve when Darrell Hair, the umpire, ruled that the ball was dead when it jammed between bat and pad before being caught after it dropped onto his boot. He also, hearteningly, mowed Daniel Vettori for six over mid-wicket.

The grip exerted by Vettori on the fourth evening was relaxing as Hussain began to bar with freedom. The teenager continued to direct his attack into the leg-stump rough, and it remained difficult to play with conviction, but either side of lunch England took control for the first time in the match.

When Atherton was out, nibbling a shade wearily at

SPORT

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 19 1997

RUGBY UNION 45

Auckland given the runaround by Harlequins



Leadership credentials beyond question after inspirational success in Christchurch

Atherton fires Ashes ambitions

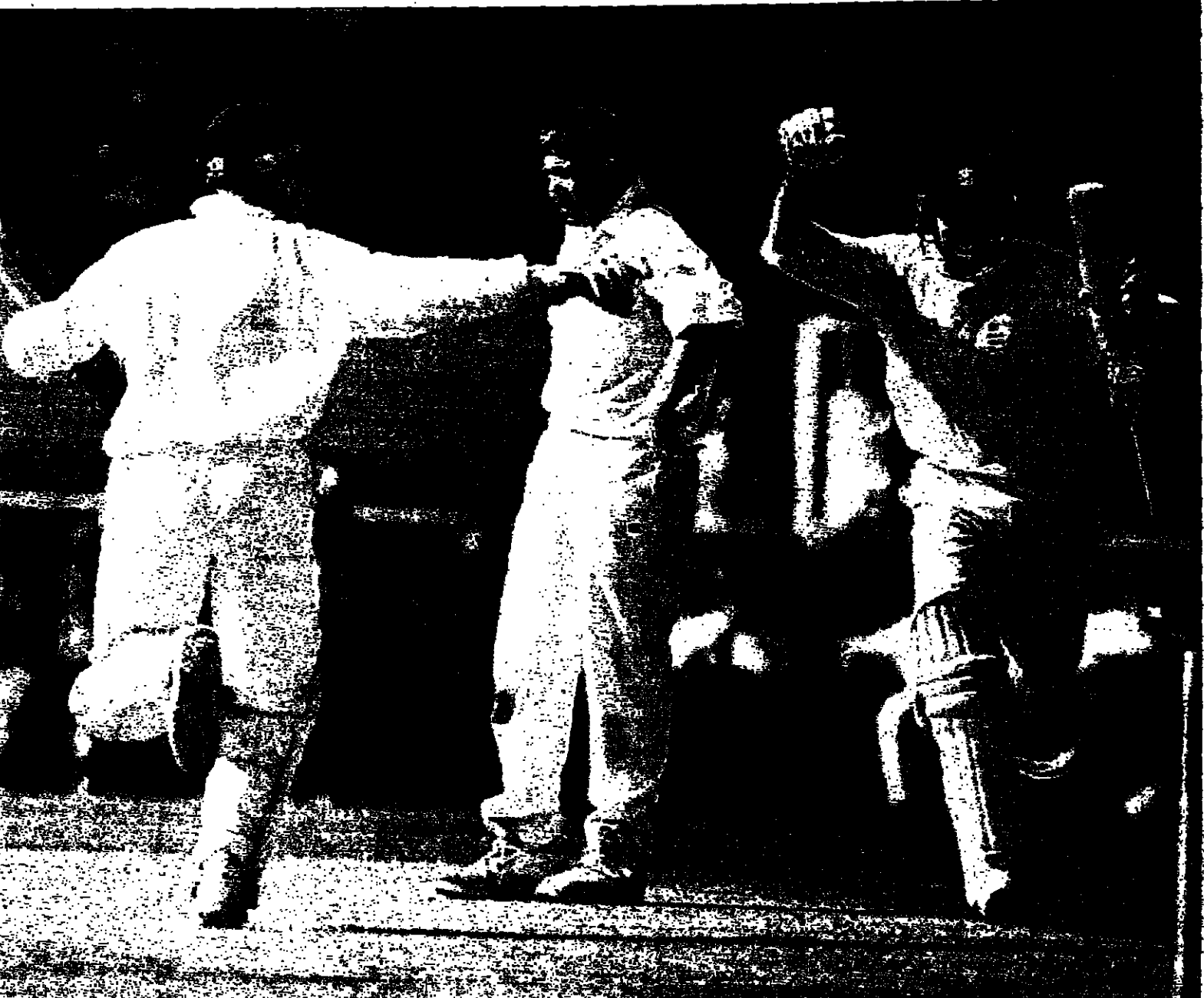
Captain to wait for vote of confidence

By Simon Wilde

AFTER what has been a turbulent couple of months, even by the standards of recent England cricket captains, Michael Atherton has almost certainly secured his short-term future in the job.

His fitness problems, his shortage of runs and his team's lack of success in Zimbabwe have been consigned to the distant past. However, he may still have to wait to be reappointed to lead England against Australia this summer. First of all, as he stressed yesterday, there are five one-day internationals to play against New Zealand, the first of them in Christchurch tomorrow.

Second, with the transition from the now defunct Test and County Cricket Board to the new English Cricket Board not yet complete, the process of choosing a captain



Cork, right, and Crawley celebrate the all-rounder's winning boundary in Christchurch yesterday, leaving Allott to reflect on a series defeat

will probably take longer this year than normal.

There are, as yet, no selectors in place, nor even a chairman, whose own appointment will not come before mid-March. By the time that such a group is assembled, the English season could be under way. The first of the Test Trophy matches against Australia is at Headingley on May 22.

It would now be a great surprise, though, if the name belonged to anyone but Atherton. He clearly commands the overwhelming support of his players and management.

The mood was summed up by Dominic Cork. "He's the right man for the job," he said. "He deserves this victory for the work he has put in. We are now looking forward to taking on Australia - especially under Mike Atherton's leadership."

England, then, have won an overseas series for the first time in five years. It is easy to say they only beat New Zealand, and it is true that the opposition was fragile. It is also true that this was a victory vital to the avoidance of yet more unhealthy speculation and disruption for only with continuity can the national team hope to advance.

Rixon, who offered no excuses, said: "This series could have ended 2-1 and it could have been 3-0 but today it might also have been 1-1. If that had happened, I have to say we would have been a bit flattered."

Later, the fatigue showing around his eyes but the adrenalin still fresh in his voice, he said: "We got in a muddle in this game because they got too many runs and we didn't get enough. New Zealand were the better side for two days but it made a test of character for us and we came through strongly."

As the match ended in a flurry of strokes, Atherton rose, wide-eyed, from the edge of his bench, threw his arms aloft and then hugged the nearest team-mate, who happened to be Alec Stewart.

Vettori had tired, but after 57 overs in only his second Test, that was no discredit to him. The disappointment for New Zealand, was that no one else could either contain or penetrate as England's target shrank to 48 at tea, then just 15 when the last hour began.

"It was certainly pretty tense," Atherton said. "I don't like watching in such circumstances but I forced myself."

Nathan Aspinall, after completing his eleventh Test century, only 79 more runs were required. The anxiety that has so often followed his fall was fully evident as Hussain was out in the next over, caught trying to withdraw his bat against Vettori, and Graham Thorpe gave a tame return catch to the same bowler.

Three wickets had fallen for five runs in 16 balls and New Zealand were surging again, their fielding tigerish and their bowling confident. Crawley and Cork, however, who both owed England some resolution in this match,

P	W	L	D	% won
P B H May	41	20	10	68.75
M A Atherton	40	10	17	58.00
G A Gough	34	10	12	52.41
D G Crowe	32	5	18	51.82
J M Brunning	31	4	8	58.33
R Wengert	31	12	6	58.71
E R Dwyer	30	9	7	54.00
M C Croxall	27	4	15	59.88
M J K Smith	25	5	3	77.00
L Hutton	23	11	4	47.83
A W Gilling	22	5	6	68.89
A C MacLennan	22	4	11	59.18
W R Hameyer	20	4	2	80.00

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

1021

ACROSS

1 Foundation (5)
2 Hurrahs type of cushion (7)
3 Elvis - (7)
4 Book collection (7)
5 Beret (6)
6 Bot. free-garden (9)
7 Where the angry climb (2,3,4)
8 Full-length ball (cricket) (6)
9 Beer makers (7)
10 Of the Prophet's religion (7)
11 Dried, wrinkled (with age) (7)
12 Stop flowing; use tea-towel (5,2)

DOWN

1 Two-legged creature (5)
2 Suddenly change course (6)
3 "Who is - what is size" (Two G. of V.) (6)
4 Welsh passion (4)
5 Origin (6)
6 Crushing embrace (4,3)
7 I wish things were otherwise (2,4)
8 Tilt; cheque-writer (6)
9 Censure (7)
10 Sort of moonkey; bad mistake (6)
11 Sprawled (6)
12 (Clothes) inadequate (6)
13 Go over again (5)
14 Team; surface (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1020

ACROSS: 1 Gossip 5 Buck 8 Mire 9 Aberrant 10 Castaway 11 Iraq 12 Mifit 14 Enzyme 16 Card 18 Free vote 20 Mallow 21 Band 22 Thor 23 Duster

DOWN: 2 Origami 3 Spelt 4 Play with fire 5 Berlek 6 Congo 7 Very Reverend 13 Fiddler 15 Matinee 17 Abash 19 Vibes

FULL FINAL SCORES

NEW ZEALAND: First Innings B A Young b Cork 11 B A Pocock c Atherton b Croft 22 G P Thorpe b Gough 42 S P Fleming c Stewart b Croft 62 N J Aspinall c Hussain b Croft 15 C L Cairns c Stewart b Caddick 57 S B Doull run out (Thorpe/Stewart) 1 D L Vettori run out (Thorpe/Stewart) 1 H T Davis c Hussain b Croft 8 G I Allott not out 8 Extras (1, 1, 1, 1, 1) 5 Total (129.1 overs, 528mins) 346	NEW ZEALAND: Second Innings B A Young c Knight b Tufnell 48 S P Fleming c Knight b Tufnell 11 N J Aspinall c Hussain b Croft 15 C L Cairns c Knight b Tufnell 52 S B Doull c Knight b Croft 5 M J Home c Stewart b Caddick 13 D L Vettori not out 29 Extras (0, 4, 1, 1, 1) 7 Total (84.4 overs, 346mins) 228	ENGLAND: First Innings N V Knight c Fleming b Allott 14 B A Pocock c Atherton b Croft 22 G P Thorpe b Gough 42 S P Fleming c Stewart b Croft 62 N J Aspinall c Hussain b Croft 15 C L Cairns c Stewart b Caddick 57 S B Doull run out (Thorpe/Stewart) 1 D L Vettori run out (Thorpe/Stewart) 1 H T Davis c Hussain b Croft 8 G I Allott not out 8 Extras (1, 1, 1, 1, 1) 5 Total (129.1 overs, 528mins) 346	ENGLAND: Second Innings N V Knight c Davis b Vettori 29 M A Atherton c Parore b Aspinall 118 S P Fleming c Parore b Aspinall 17 A R Caddick c Stewart b Doull 18 N Hussain c Fleming b Vettori 38 G P Thorpe c and b Vettori 8 Extras (1, 1, 1, 1, 1) 5 Total (84.4 overs, 346mins) 228
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South Africa rugby coach resigns

ON THE eve of a new southern hemisphere season, against a backdrop of financial intrigue and a failed drugs test, South Africa lost their national coach yesterday. André Markgraaff resigned in Kimberley after a countrywide outcry against a tape recording on which he is alleged to have made a series of racist remarks.

Markgraaff had been in office less than a year and was the subject of another national campaign last summer when he dropped Francois Pienaar, captain of the 1995 World Cup-winning team, from the squad that toured Argentina, France and Wales. Though results on that tour re-established Markgraaff's credentials, he will not now have the chance to pit his renowned team against the British Isles in June.

Over the weekend, media outlets were circulated with copies of the tape, made by a former provincial player, André Bester, which included a string of obscenities and abusive comments about Muleki George, the senior vice-president of the South African Rugby Football Union (SARFU). The SARFU executive committee meets in Johannesburg today, but Louis Luyt, their president, had already distanced himself from Markgraaff, whose decision to quit may have saved the union the embarrassing decision to sack him.

That decision comes too late, however, for Pienaar, who is contracted to Saracens for the next two years. Markgraaff had indicated that there would be no place for the former Transvaal flanker in future national teams, although Pienaar is still ambitious to play international rugby; but if he is competing outside South Africa, he is unlikely to be considered by the new management team.

The most likely successor as coach is Nic Mallett, the former Oxford University Blue, who was assistant to Markgraaff on the autumn tour. Mallett played No 8 for South Africa in the mid-1980s, and has been working with Carel du Plessis, the former Springbok wing; if they take over, they will have one international against Italy on June 12 before the three-match series with the Lions begins.

"It's very unfortunate, particularly when so much has been achieved through South African rugby, that this should flare up, but it's an internal matter for SARFU," Fran Cotton, the Lions manager, said. "The last thing you want is for anything to undermine what has been achieved in South Africa."

At Newcastle will confirm today the signing from Wigan rugby league club of Vaeaiga Tuigamala, the former New Zealand wing who played for Western Samoa against Ireland last November.

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